

fifth estate

Spring 2025



\$5



Where's my issue?

We've heard that question a considerable number of times recently from subscribers, bookstores, and distributors.

No, you haven't missed an issue. The last one we published was our Summer 2024 edition. The one you are holding is Spring 2025.

This issue marks the beginning of our 60th year of continuous publication. We used to joke that the Fifth Estate was once a weekly in the early 1970s, but now our goal is a yearly. We met that criterion for 2024. If you are a subscriber, how often can you expect an issue? Subscriptions, which provide the basic finances for continuing publication, are for four issues regardless of when or how often we appear.

We realize that the number below one is zero, but our plans are to continue editing a unique and dynamic magazine that carries forth the ideas of the anarchist comrades who preceded us and those active today.

Anarchist print publications, that once proliferated in our movement, are down to a handful, particularly in North America. We take production of each edition of the Fifth Estate as not only walking in the steps of those who have come before us, but with the same enthusiasm for the ideals of a world free of the state and capitalism.

"You can say I'm a dreamer. . ." as the song goes, but we continue on with "*Un nuevo mundo en nuestros corazones*"—A new world in our hearts as our Spanish comrades promised almost a hundred years ago.

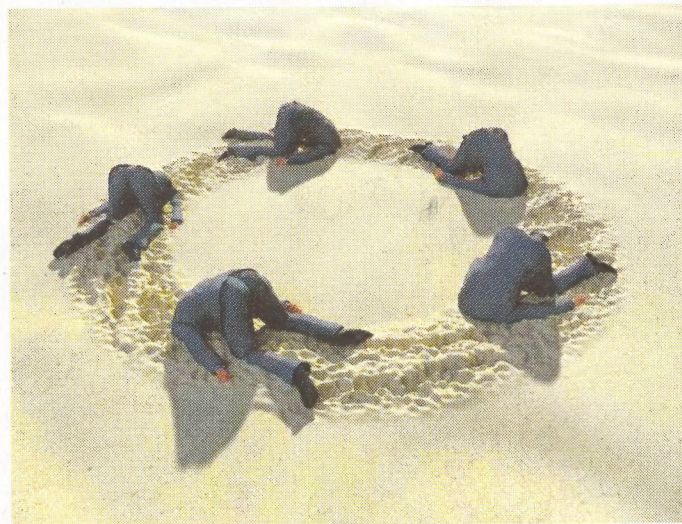
As always, this issue has been published by many hands and the support of its readers.

**fifth
estate**

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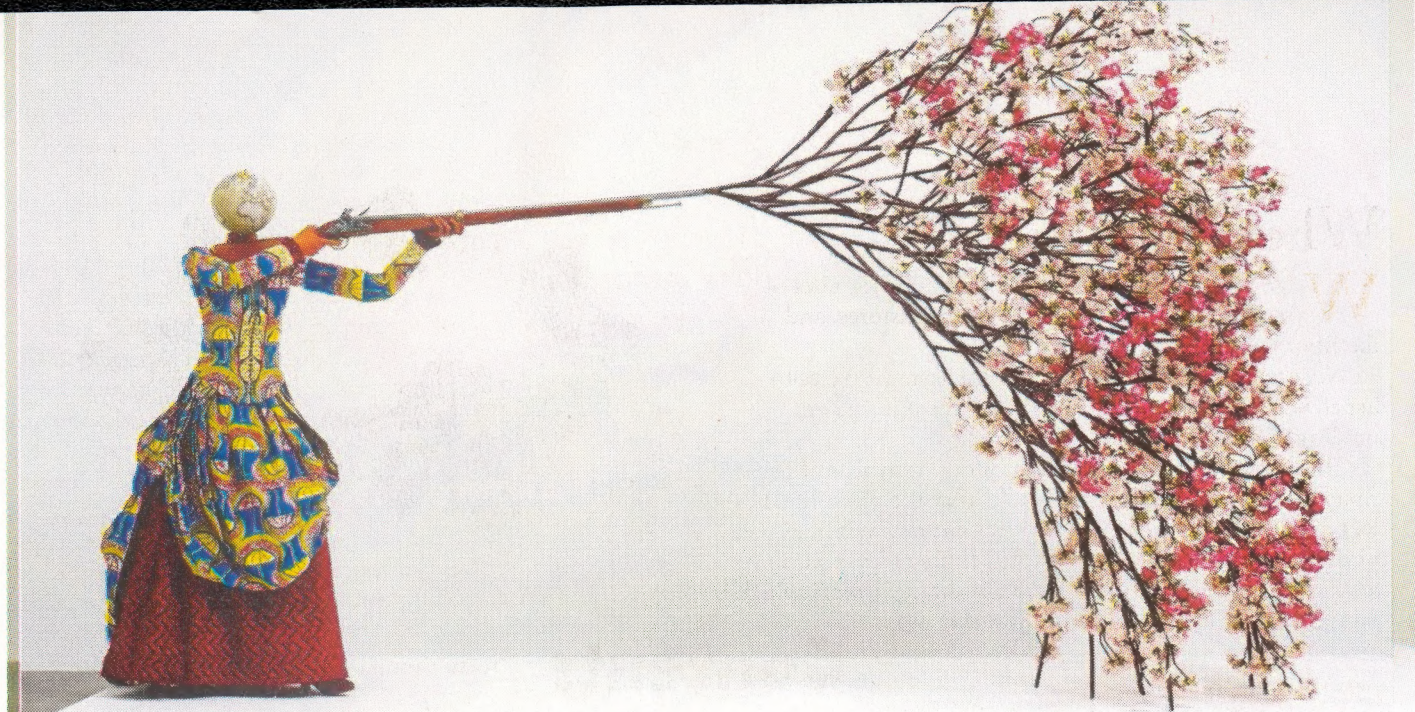
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Lives of the Great Enchanters

The Moon and Serpent Bumper Book of Magic

Alan Moore and Steve Moore

Top Shelf Productions and Knockabout Comics, 2024

KRISTIAN WILLIAMS

Two writers, life-long friends, became practicing magicians and decades later decided to share what they have learned.

Alan Moore is almost certainly the most important comics writer of the last half-century, having greatly expanded both the range and the depth of the medium, subverting, deconstructing, or reinventing every genre in which he has worked.

He most famously brought a sense of realpolitik to our superhero stories in the graphic novel *Watchmen*, though with later titles like *Tom Strong* and *Promethea* he tried to recapture the genre's sense of wonder. In *Swamp Thing* and *Providence*, he likewise used horror to challenge the morality of the social order, while *Lost Girls* converted Victorian children's literature into lurid pornography, elevated pornography to high art, and even used the story to deliver a powerful anti-war moral.

Though less famous, the late Steve Moore (no relation, except for where it counts: in affinity) was an accomplished writer in his own right, having penned stories for British comics staples like *2000 AD* and *Warrior*, and working for a while as an editor of the *Fortean Times*. Indeed, if we take influence to be both cumulative and transitive, he may even be said to have been more influential than his celebrated collaborator, in that it was Steve who taught Alan to write comics in the first place.

Equally relevant for the present discussion, it was also Steve who led Alan to magic. Though Alan Moore created something of a stir when he announced, on the occasion of his fortieth birthday in 1993, that he intended to become a ritual magician, in truth, he had been for some years observing as his friend Steve quietly developed his craft.

As Alan documented in his essay "The Unearthing," Steve enlisted him to witness the summoning of a lunar goddess, Selene. The result was either a shared hallucination, or else the deity's visible manifestation on the material plane—a remarkable occurrence in either case, which may lead us to wonder how different the one is from the other.

When Alan then began his own magical practice, he devoted himself to the worship of the second-century snake god Glycon, which had itself been manifested in the physical realm in the less mysterious form of a puppet operated by Alexander of Abonoteichus, "the first archeologically verifiable magician." It was only later that the two Moores learned that Alexander's stage show featured Selene as well and Glycon—a moon and a serpent.

Improbably many years later, and a decade after Steve Moore's sudden demise, the result of these multiple pairings has arrived as *The Moon and Serpent Bumper Book of Magic*, a harmless-sounding title for an intimidating tome. The book comprises a history of the practice told through the "Lives of the Great Enchanters," detailed instructions for some basic magical activities, a novella depicting the initiation of a novice, and a long conclusion that doubles as a kind of manifesto.

The volume is beautifully illustrated, in a variety of distinct, but harmonious styles, displaying the talents of several comics artists, Rick Veitch and Kevin O'Neill among them,



Tracy Grubbs, "From Being Its Proper Self," Oil on canvas, 39.25" x 55" (diptych)

along with historical illustrations and an original portrait of Glycon by Alan Moore himself.

The two Moores suggest, among other things, that the human imagination exists as a kind of shared landscape, that gods and demons can be understood as autonomous projections of the subconscious mind, and that all of culture is in some respect an outgrowth of the occult. These are weighty ideas that the authors somehow hold lightly.

They forward hypothesis, suggest interpretations, and openly speculate. But they never insist, make few definite claims, and seldom lecture. They are happy to offer the reader the benefit of their experience, and that of the wisdom that they have acquired through their research, but they also make it clear that this can be no substitute for one's own experience, one's own wisdom.

Tempering their words of inspiration and practical instruction, this pair of wizard-guides offers a number of warnings—sober-minded cautions concerning a "life wasted in idle fantasy or a mind ruined by delusion," quick and relatively gentle jabs against Satanism, Wicca, chaos magick, and the New Age movement, and most of all, exhortations against any attempt to use magic for petty pursuits like making money, exacting revenge, or meeting girls.

Thus, they advise, "Free yourself from low material intentions by committing to a form of magical expression which demands we practice the Art for the Art's sake, rather than our own."

This invocation of aestheticism, constituting a philosophical and even a political commitment, is evident in nearly all of Alan Moore's work. Not only does he prize the skill, craft, and joy of creation and disdain the commercial exploitation of art through the endless production of sequels, prequels, movie and television adaptations, action figures, video games, and Happy Meal tie-ins, but the liberatory potential of beauty, pleasure, and imagination is a constant theme in his work, showing up in comics like *V for Vendetta*, *Lost Girls*, and *Promethea*, and in prose essays like "25,000 Years of Erotic Freedom" and (full disclosure) his introduction to my book about Oscar Wilde and anarchism.

The Bumper Book, both in terms of its content and as an objet d'art itself, represents a continuation of that aestheticist tradition.

The book is also explicit about its politics, describing magic as "a subjective practice of the individual, a means by which a single self may come to its own understanding of and make its own peace with the wonderful and terrible phenomenon that is existence," and suggesting that magic is therefore "congruent" with anarchism and "its insistence upon individual self-governance unmediated by an external authority."

Common to the subjectivist mysticism, autonomist politics, and aesthetic imagination is a principle expounded by the Romantic poet William Blake: "I must create a system or be enslaved by another man's"—a motto, the two Moores note, suitable to "an artist, a magician, or an anarchist."

There is, too, a deeper sense of politics implicit to the Moon and Serpent project: a new role for magic, re-unifying the disparate disciplines which were once its province: science, politics, art, and spirituality.

This would, of course, completely reorient our conceptual universe—turning the pentacle right-side-up, if you will—and it is hard to imagine what the social and political implications would be, though it's clear that the Moores anticipate it landing us closer to the anarchist end of the spectrum. In particular, their suggestion that we replace religion with magic would imply a move away from authoritative institutions, settled dogma, and priestly hierarchies.

The long historical process by which magic was divided into separate disciplines, and may in the future be reintegrated, is described in the text as an application of the alchemical procedure *solve et coagula*—analysis and synthesis. But the authors also repeatedly refer to the first part of the process as a dismemberment, calling to mind a separate point of comparison: the death of the god Osiris, the rending of his body, and the scattering of his limbs and organs. His sister/lover Isis then sought out his remains and reassembled him—failing only to locate the phallus. By the logic of this barely-suppressed metaphor, our culture has divided the various elements of magic, and is at present missing the means for unification—the magician's wand.

This is a myth of loss, which calls us to further quests: Discover the wand—the magical principle, the True Will—and reunify the whole. The completion of this task marks the conclusion of one quest, but the commencement of a greater adventure. Not the end of history, but the dawn of a new Aeon.

Kristian Williams is the author of *The Illuminist: Philosophical Explorations in the Work of Alan Moore* (Emergency Hearts, 2024) and *Resist Everything Except Temptation: The Anarchist Philosophy of Oscar Wilde* (AK Press, 2020).



Would restorative justice been a better outcome?

Man Responsible for Jen Angel's Death Receives 7 years

PETER WERBE

The man responsible for the death of Oakland, Calif. social justice activist, anarchist, and baker, Jen Angel, was sentenced to eight years imprisonment for manslaughter and robbery. Twenty-year-old Ishmael Burch accepted a plea deal in August of last year.

Angel was dragged to death in February 2023 when she became entangled in the car Burch was driving after he had stolen her purse.

From the beginning, Loved Ones of Jen Angel, a group of friends, community members, and activists, rejected the path of the traditional justice system calling upon the city district attorney to use "all available alternatives to traditional prosecution such as restorative justice." They proposed a framework for this that would entail a non-carceral process in charging and sentencing options to "mitigate harm done through the prison system." The D.A.'s office rejected their wishes.

The Loved Ones wrote that the plea deal was "the best possible outcome under the current legal system. We know Jen would not want someone involved in her death to waste away in prison for decades, and take some comfort in knowing Ishmael has a chance to repair some of the harm he caused."

Like other prison activists and abolitionists, Jen believed that accountability was crucial, but that cops and courts, prosecutors and prisons were part of a system that only bolstered a violent and unequal society. That equation can be seen on the day of Jen's death where a poor, young black man acted out one of the scripts endemic to poverty—crime—and met fatefully with a white, middle-class woman where all of the injustice of class society became tragically manifest.

One of the functions of the so-called criminal justice system is to assure the sanctity of property particularly from predation by the poor. Crimes of the rich, which create the context for those of the poor, rarely get punished. Eighteenth century anarchist, Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, saw it clearly: "Laws! Spider webs for the rich and powerful; steel chains for the weak and poor."

The massive state institution of apprehension, adjudication, and incarceration of those who violate laws is a multi-billion dollar industry in itself that requires the continuance of transgressions regardless of its claim to want to end what is

the basis of their existence. Justice can be seen as one of the many rackets of capitalism.

Restorative justice is an extra-judicial practice exterior to the state punitive bureaucracy based on healing harm and repairing community integrity and safety through a number of non-carceral techniques. Would this have provided a resolution in the situation that ended in Jen Angel's death? Or, was the social gulf between Jen and Ishmael Burch too great and too deep to make a process based on community even possible? It's clear no good will come of Burch going to prison. It won't restore Jen's life and probably won't act as a deterrent as cops and prison never do.

One can only speculate on what would have been Burch's reaction if he was spared imprisonment and instead, had to do what? Community service? Work in Jen's bakery? Would he think he had gotten off easy or truly be repentant for a crime he didn't intend to commit? Hopefully, it would be the former, but we do know that prisons, with their repressive and violent conditions, usually only serve to diminish the humanity of those caught in the spider web.

Prison reform is possible based on some of the models in countries such as Denmark, but crime can only disappear when we have a fully cooperative society in place of the current class-structured one.

The memory of Jen's work and commitment continue on. Agency, an anarchist public education organization, established the Jen Angel Anarchist Media Grants. Launched in 2023, as a collaboration with the Institute for Anarchist Studies, the grants support media projects that advance awareness and understanding of anarchist principles and practices and make them accessible to a broad audience. Her bakery continues to be an Oakland community fixture, as well.

More information about Agency and application for media grants is at anarchistagency.com.



World War III in Comics **GALLOWS HUMOR, BEAUTY IN RESISTANCE**

World War 3 Now? World War 3 Illustrated, Issue#54

Jordan Worley, Nicole Shulman, Seth Tobocman,
Sue Simensky Bietila, eds.
AK Press, 2024

ERIC LAURSEN

The new issue of *World War 3 Illustrated*, the 54th, is one of the biggest in the history of this long-running project, with over 50 artists and writers contributing.

The WW 3 Illustrated collective was formed in 1979, in the shadow of Ronald Reagan's impending election, by a group of New York City comix artists as a venue for explicitly political art. It has now been covering the deepening plight of our ravaged planet for long enough that these horrors can seem to longtime readers like a hideous kind of business-as-usual. Except that the artists and writers who produced this issue continue to find gallows humor in the horrors and beauty in resistance.

That said, the new issue announces itself with grim eloquence. On the front cover is an image by Palestinian artist Tayseer Barakat of a woman, living behind a wall, and behind that, a procession of tanks. Turn the book over and we see a cactus, a symbol of Israeli-born Jews, looming against the wall.

After Israel began its ground invasion of southern Lebanon on October 1, a chorus of so-called world leaders, starting with U.S. President Biden, intoned fearfully that if a

ceasefire was not arranged forthwith, the Middle East could almost literally explode. Coupling the assault on recent Lebanon to Israel's campaign of ethnic cleansing in Gaza, UN secretary general António Guterres warned, the Middle East crisis had "become a non-stop nightmare that threatens to take the whole region down."

Which only raises the question whether the "non-stop nightmare" is not upon us already, and not just in the Middle East. Hasn't World War III already begun?

The people of Ukraine, holding off a two-and-a-half-year-long Russian onslaught, might well think it has; so too the people of Africa's Sahel, caught between military governments and Islamist insurgents; the people of Sudan's Darfur region, decimated by a civil war between rival military strongmen; the people of Gaza and the West Bank, under bombardment by a government that seems determined to obliterate them; and the Israelis forced to flee their homes near the Lebanese border under Hezbollah rocket fire.

Meanwhile, civil wars rage in South Sudan, Myanmar, Libya, Congo, and elsewhere, often aggravated by outside big-power interference. In the industrialized world, mainstream politicians sit passively—at best—as neo-fascists and movements of the reactionary right leverage fear of immigration to turn the clock back to the era of Hitler, Mussolini, and Franco.

"In many countries, anti-war statements can now result in a prison sentence," the editors remind us. "Never before have so many contributors to this magazine expressed con-



cern for their safety in publishing their views.”

Along the way—through more than 250 pages of war, ultra-nationalism, repression, reaction, and environmental catastrophe—they offer a dazzling variety of graphic styles and images, activist art that is entertaining, enlightening, and powerful. The opposite of the shallow, distorted coverage and politically timid commentary the mainstream culture machine pumps out.

Coming together in the wake of Hamas’s October 7, 2023 raid, many of the contributions here relate to the attacks that day and the mass murder and aggression the Israeli Defense Force and West Bank settlers have committed in response.

They come from a variety of points of view: the story of an Israeli survivor of the Hamas raid; art by Maisara Baroud, a Palestinian artist living and working in Gaza who had to move with his family multiple times to escape the hail of bombs; cartoonist Ethan Heitner’s protest against the impulse in the face of atrocity to act as if everything is normal. “Israel is a machine for the conversion of Jewish grief into military power,” Heitner writes. “But Jewish safety & freedom can only be found in Palestinian safety & freedom & vice versa.”

Of course, we know nothing is “normal”; that knowledge is something that *World War 3 Illustrated* has been trying to impart since its inception. That’s why a piece by tattoo artist Terry Tapp especially resonant. Pre-September 11, 2001, he recalls, most people wanted silly, playful tattoos, often expressing “interesting takes on American pop art.”

After the Twin-Towers attacks, customers wanted patriotic tattoos, then memorial tattoos commemorating increasingly horrific events, sometimes with racist overtones. Trauma, which has been a way of life for African American, Native American, and other minorities since the inception of this country, is now fetishized by the dominant culture as well.

World War 3 artists insist that all our struggles are connected. “Bienvenida” and “Rainbow Railroad,” by Bianca

and Annabelle Heckler and Samuel and Annabelle Heckler, respectively, highlight the plight of LGBTQIA+ people among the communities of undocumented people in American cities and their struggle for recognition and human rights. (“We have 8 million stories. 8 million reasons to be here. We belong to each other. We need each other.”)

Two other contributions, “Defend the Forest” by cartoonist Harbin Lostutter and “Stop Cop City,” a narrative piece by Priscilla Grimm, take us into the struggle to save Atlanta’s Weelaunee Forest from being turned into a vast police training complex after it was promised to the community; a struggle the city has attempted to repress with deadly force and dubious legal actions. But that doesn’t capture the magnitude of the powers arrayed against a low-income African American community: the police and their corporate sponsors, the city’s political establishment, developers, and prosecutors wielding domestic terrorism and racketeering charges. The case is ongoing. Very few current issues encapsulate the racial and class struggle in the U.S. today quite like Cop City.

There is much more here: Artists Seth Tobocman (a *World War 3* founder) and Tamara Tornado and journalist Bill Weinberg lay out the history and issues behind Russia’s murderous crusade to erase Ukraine, not only as a country, but as a national and cultural identity. In “30 Seconds in Gaza,” Mohammad Sabaaneh turns 30-second videos from the heart of the shattered territory, which could easily be erased, into powerful graphics influenced by *Guernica*, Picasso’s great work of anti-war, anti-fascist protest art.

Sabrina Jones revisits the story of CHARAS, the vibrant community center set up in an empty NYC public school in the 1970s that the city abandoned during the Giuliani and Bloomberg mayoralities when it sold the building to a developer. Carlo Quispe’s comic details 40 years of repression and resistance as Peruvians fight for self-determination against the country’s elite, foreign investors, and one corrupt, dictatorial president after another.

The one major crisis not covered in this issue is the catastrophic civil war in Sudan, which threatens over 20 million people with starvation and has received comparatively little attention in the mainstream media, given the relative invisibility of the Sudanese in the so-called developed world.

It’s a natural for *World War 3 Illustrated*, which has always worked to foreground eyewitnesses, often the artists themselves, making it a work of enduring, up-close journalism as much as an artists’ response to a violent, seemingly self-immolating period in human history. Something for the editors to think about as they plan the next installment in their monumental, 50-plus-year project.

Eric Laursen is a longtime anarchist writer, journalist, and activist. His latest book is *Polymath: The Life and Professions of Dr. Alex Comfort*, Author of “The Joy of Sex” from AK Press.



Zines as Means for Change

LEN BRACKEN

War of Dreams: A Field Guide to DIY Psy-Ops

Jason Rodgers
PM Press, 2024

At the height of the zine movement in the 1990s, thousands, perhaps tens of thousands—what could be thought of as armies of people—would march off to their post office boxes every day to engage in an ongoing assault on mainstream culture using low-circulation publications as their weapons of choice.

For many of those who took part in this do-it-yourself (DIY) phenomenon, often creating their zines on photocopied machines, it was a life-changing experience. For those who came later, the zine movement should be seen as a precursor for the proliferation of views now expressed on the internet.

In *War of Dreams*, Jason Rodgers documents a nearly life-long dedication to grappling, mostly via zines, with radical and conspiracy subcultures. This wrangling has been in the form of the author's reviews, letters and leaflets, as well as in surrealist collage art. These works are collected in this 336-page book, along with new essays by the self-described "conspiracy realist" specializing in "elite-power analysis" and "occult reasoning."

The book includes numerous chapters related to zines: "Samizdat and Xerography: Why Zines Refuse to Die;" "Fighting Words: Zines and Confictual Media; Zines Against Precarious Capitalism." Rodgers continues to have high hopes for the impact of zines to "make change based on resonance, invisibly," and to "make change at some future point, when least expected."

Rodgers is a longstanding contributor to the zine movement who moved to Albany in 2009 to collaborate with Suzy "Crowbar" Poe, publisher of the zine, *Popular Reality*. He stopped publishing his zine, *Psionic Plastic Joy*, in 2015 while "suffering from a sense of hopelessness about the world," but continues to create and distribute his exceptional xerox collages in the mail art network. At some point, he started to publish flyers that included "mean jokes" and "heavy polemics," mostly targeting radicals in Albany, as well as critical theory and surrealist

stream of consciousness literature.

These texts reflect Rodgers, an avowed anomaly, yet also the anomalies of an era stretching back to the 1990s—that is, the individuals, groups, books and music found in the margins of American culture during this period.

Some readers may recall Ivan Stang and the Church of the SubGenius, *Factsheet Five*, the mega-review zine that ran from 1982 to 1998, and Loompanics Unlimited, the now defunct publisher of controversial books, such as Ragnar Redbeard's 1896 revolting *Might Is Right*, subject of a long review by Rodgers. Few will be aware of all the wild ideas and eccentric individuals under discussion in *War of Dreams*.

"I am interested in ideas that don't fit...," Rodgers states on the back cover. "It isn't important to reach the masses, instead we want a growing lunatic fringe, schizoid anarchists who are uncontrollable and irresistible."

It's impossible to say to what degree, over the past three decades, the social space occupied by people in the margins has grown, encroaching on the mainstream.

One could certainly argue there is seemingly more acceptance and inclusion of the "lunatic fringe" in mainstream discourse. One should anticipate, as Rodgers does in an essay on *X-Files* and *The Lone Gunmen* spinoff, the objection that the fringe has been co-opted by the mainstream. This begs the question as to which side is actually growing, the fringe or the mainstream.

Unfortunately, these trends seem to have been accompanied by an increase in what is more conventionally thought of as people on the margins of society—those who are impoverished, ill, addicted or otherwise destitute. One can understand how those suffering from deprivation amid plenty might lapse into a capitalism-induced schizoid personality. But is that really desirable for an anarchist? It's hard to see how a schizoid's emotional detachment and social disinterest would be favorable for a long-term social transformation along

There are instances when Rodgers does seem detached and lacking empathy. A leaflet in the author's Campaign to Play for Keeps, for example, blasts the meal-providing group Food Not Bombs as "Diarrhea for the People." It satirizes the mishandling of half-rotten produce by "junky traveler kids" in the context of internalizing guilt and checking privilege. "People are too full of shit. Food Not Bombs can help! One meal and the system is clear!"

"This is what I love about zines and anti-media: they have the capability to actually change reality," Rodgers writes in the context of another polemic, one in which a zine detailing sexual abuse was used as a "weapon to wage war." Rodgers added, in a tone reminiscent of Robespierre: "It was a thrill to destroy the life of someone who really deserved it." The individual in question was thus prevented from creating an activist cult of personality around himself, moved away, and kept his head down lest Rodgers attack again.

"To create DIY creations should be a focusing of will, a direction of intent," Rodgers writes. "It might be part of a preparation for beginning to disentangle ourselves from the planetary work machine."

Rodgers previously covered similar subterranean themes in his 2021 book, *Invisible Generation: Rants, Polemics, and Critical Theory Against the Planetary Work Machine*, also published by Autonomedia. Anarchists might want these books as references to people and events that took place in the fairly recent past that could have a bearing on their current practices.

There is a revolution growing inside of us, an immense dissatisfaction and frustration that will destroy us unless we find a way of channeling this energy into something that can give us some kind of hope.

They will likely be put off by one of the last chapters in which Rodgers explores disparate means of escaping the current system, ranging from space to pirate fantasies. Others will enjoy the way the author synthesizes Hakim Bey, Henry David Thoreau, Josiah Warren, Samuel R. Delany, James C. Scott, Pierre Clastres, Ralph Borsodi, John Zerzan, Laurance Labadie, and Jacques Camatte in an essay that is both for and against escapism.

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Lives of the Saints by Alan Franklin

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FIFTH ESTATE 9 SPRING 2025



UNABOMBER 2.0

Luigi Mangione: Internet Saint, Folk Hero, Assassin

JESS FLARITY

A deadly drone war rages between Ukraine and Russia. A.I.-generated images are appearing on restaurant menus and as logos in grocery store aisles. Students all around the world are flooding ChatGPT essays into their online courses.

And, for some reason, the world's richest man is now tampering with the secure government data banks of one of the world's most powerful nations because the country re-elected a third-rate reality TV star who has a meme coin worth \$180 billion dollars. Despite all of this, the assassination of United Healthcare CEO Brian Thompson in December by 26-year-old Luigi Mangione may be the most cyberpunk event of the 21st century.

Cyberpunk is a genre of science fiction first popularized in the roaring Reagan years of 1980s. Its plots usually include all-powerful corporations, a corrupt and ineffective government, and hacker protagonists fighting back against their oppressors. Through a low-life and high tech mentality, these scrappy proletariats use their wits and technological prowess to strike fear into the hearts of the megalomaniacs.

In fiction and video games like *Cyberpunk 2077*, this futuristic setting is glamorized in mirror shades and blazing neon, but in real life, it's the homeless person on the corner with their Venmo scrawled in sharpie on a scrap of cardboard. It's the misinformation flooding your social media

feed, the spam emails clogging your inbox, and the CEOs of these companies continuing to secretly harvest your data while donating millions to a presidential inaugural fund. Fictional cyberpunk is all flash and implants; real-life cyberpunk is your neighbor's house being bought up by a rental company so they can flip it into an Airbnb.

In short: real-life cyberpunk is fucking *awful*.

This is why Mangione is seen as a cyberpunk folk hero. He tracked his target using digital surveillance, 3D-printed his own gun, and successfully escaped from the center of a mega-city covered in security cameras and crawling with police forces. But just like in many of these grim narratives, Mangione's ending will likely be an unhappy one with a lifetime prison sentence as his future. Though there is talk of jury nullification where "Free Luigi" becomes a reality, the American capitalism machine rolls on.

Are you wanting that hot, disaffected, anti-corporate Gen-Z look? Mangione's hooded assassin's jacket is available for 60% off at Macy's demonstrating how quickly the news cycle turns it back on what had taken up all its oxygen just weeks before. His iconic burgundy courtroom sweater will only set you back \$62.65 from Nordstrom. Thousands of "Deny, Delay, Depose" merchandise options are available on Etsy.

Along with this wide assortment of products, Mangione's conventional good looks are a marketable commodity in our image-obsessed society. Wisecrack one-liners from the late-night news clowns and countless internet memes made

the rounds for a few weeks, but any favorable rhetoric surrounding Mangione's actions was scrubbed by mainstream media. As a recent example, comedian Bill Burr referenced Mangione on the Jimmy Kimmel Show in January, but the shot cuts away when Burr gives him a shoutout. Censorship of free speech related to this event is still unfolding across the internet today.

News outlets continue to paint a much broader (and safer) picture of Mangione as a young man radicalized through the Unabomber's manifesto. They insist he was a wealthy loner with a personal grudge against the healthcare industry. Some reporters even attacked the core of his masculinity and asserted that Mangione's back injury made it impossible for him to function sexually, creating a false impression of him as an incel, an involuntary celibate. Despite the negative press, people organized online support groups, but like Mangione's own social media accounts, these were shut down almost immediately.

Social media sites regularly cleanse all content even tangentially referencing the killing with Reddit being particularly notable for immediately deleting any related posts, hindering chances of individuals attempting to organize in a forum setting. Similarly, GoFundMe pulled an initial Mangione fundraiser, citing that they prohibit fundraisers for legal defense of violent crimes, but GiveSendGo still has a "preemptive legal fundraiser" available for donations, which has topped \$425,000 from over 10,000 individual donations.

It is unclear who launched this campaign, as there is a note that if the Mangione legal team rejects the funds, they will be donated to a cause in his name. Perhaps fearful of retribution due to the terrorism charges he faces, everyone involved with this venture is anonymous, and our attempt to reach out to the organizers never received a response.

As of February, organizing anything around Mangione continues to be blocked. Posts referencing his name are removed, accounts are banned, and subreddits/forums permanently deleted. The digital universe is still powered by likes, clicks, and upvotes, and until this hierarchical way of organizing information is restructured, the internet will only provide the illusion of being a free space.

Cyberspace pretends to be a nexus of interlaced communication, but the net is really an enormous mall, and the corporate executives are having Free Luigi graffiti scrawled on the bathroom walls continually painted over. This is not cyberpunk; it is techno-feudalism, and the oligarchs are controlling the masses through purposeful confusion and noise.

Where is the army of class consciousness warriors created by Mangione's sacrifice? Unlike the massive accumulation of racial injustices that blossomed into the Black Lives Matter movement, it is doubtful that even an unfair criminal trial will provide such a catalyst related to our healthcare woes. Those few dozen people who have shown up in the real world to support Mangione appear to be young women in a

Mangione has been adopted as a modern equivalent of Robin Hood, though the fact that he shoots the Sheriff of Nottingham in the back is somewhat disturbing.

state of hybristophilia (sexual interest in those who commit crimes) and a handful of steely protestors. This is a bad sign.

Despite the lack of long-term investment for dismantling the corporate grip on the lives of the everyday American, this event will remain cemented into our cultural consciousness as the emergence of one of our first cyberpunk folk heroes. Mangione has been adopted as a modern equivalent of Robin Hood, though the fact that he shoots the Sheriff of Nottingham in the back is somewhat disturbing. It shows how broken the system is. There is no way to redistribute the suffering the system has caused by stealing from the rich and a blood sacrifice is not enough. But these corporations are not a single corrupt sheriff or king. They are complex interconnected systems that require dismantling piece-by-piece if not in one swift blow.

Capitalism can't be restructured with bullets, even if they are engraved with "Deny, Delay, and Depose." The Monopoly money Mangione left behind sent a stronger message, but to effectuate change within the system, CEOs need to be financially assassinated. We need to kill their paychecks, their stock options, and their profits. This requires a complex redistribution of power and policy changes that are infinitely more complex than 3D-printing a gun and buying a bus ticket to New York.

Perhaps Mangione saw such a change as hopeless, which is why he chose the simpler path of extreme violence that has entitled him to a place in history as one who participates in the propaganda of the deed, as 19th century anarchists referred to such acts. Wikipedia's article on the subject has already been altered to include him as carrying out the first "notable action" of insurrectionary anarchism since 1932. But much more likely, this is the story of a man, a handsome, perhaps lonely, perhaps narcissistic, perhaps mentally unwell, educated young man, who some have elevated to folk hero status because of our own frustration and bitterness with an industry that continues to destroy us.

Don't spiral yourself into a locked room where shooting someone is the only way out. Talk, organize, unionize, march, resist. We don't need folk heroes; we need empathetic human beings.

Jess Flarity has a PhD in Literature from the University of New Hampshire and writes frequently for Fifth Estate. He lives with his fiancé and stepson in the shadow of the Big Tech companies of the Pacific Northwest and will never be able to afford a house.



Can Permaculture Be Confrontational?

Gardening for the middle-class or a challenge to capitalism?

MAX SHAVER

The greatest alienation that capitalism has wrought on humanity is perhaps not labor power, as posited by Marx, but rather the ability to live a life reliant on nature. Where once humanity was in intimate contact with the natural world, cityscapes, abstract economies, and industrial technocracy now dominate our lives.

Capitalist economic and legal structures have been extremely efficient at prohibiting subsistence economies. Land ownership is now a necessary requisite to interact with nature beyond supervised visitation to mismanaged landscapes. This alienation has occurred with such efficiency that nature's absence from society is practically perceived as a given.

The expulsion of peasants from the commons in the 17th century was the first primary action of modern capitalism. Removing the means for a subsistence economy made them dependent on social hierarchy, forcing them to sell their labor. As colonialism propagated across the Atlantic, it was necessary to destroy the lifeways of the Indigenous population, resulting in atrocities such as the murder of millions of bison. This caused the Indigenous people to become dependent on Western commerce, racking up debt and coercing them into signing unfavorable treaties.

Throughout history, one of the primary interventions of social hierarchy in human society has been to remove the capacity for communities to maintain subsistence lifestyles. If nature can provide the necessary resources for life, then accumulation is unnecessary. The illusion that systems of subsistence based on an accurate observation of nature cannot provide for our needs is crucial for the complicity with social hierarchy.

The promise of permaculture has been to eliminate this illusion through the application of extensive observation in the design of material systems that simultaneously enhances the evolutionary process of nature and provides for human needs. Accurate observations of the entire apparatus of eco-

systems (rather than the dissection of components) allows the permaculture practitioner to replicate nature's material success.

The principles observed are applied to meeting human needs, ensuring that both present and future generations can enjoy lives with all material necessities met. Food, fiber, water, building materials, etc. are grown and produced in sophisticated systems of interconnection and interdependence that strongly resemble the ecosystem within which they reside. Through the permaculture design process, the inherently sustainable and resilient qualities of natural ecosystems are replicated in material human systems.

The ability of permaculture to provide for all human needs can preclude the social accumulation of power and the material accumulation of wealth. While some degree of authority is required due to the expertise required to design and maintain these systems, this authority is not highly technical or esoteric.

Juxtaposed with the technological expertise required to operate and maintain the extensive extraction-manufacturing economy, permaculture is extremely accessible. A centralized, hierarchical, de-localized system of resource management is unnecessary. Because the global capitalist economy is dependent on the extraction of materials, the transportation of these materials across vast distances, and the extensive manufacturing process required to produce consumer goods, the social hierarchy of technocrats, bureaucrats, the wealthy, and their enforcers who oversee this system lose their place in a material system that seeks to replicate nature in a localized system of interdependent components.

The ability for humans to learn from their environment and meet their needs utilizing accurate observations of nature has been a crucial part of our evolution. Permaculture is simply a modern, Western iteration of this inherently human capacity.

Indigenous societies around the world have thoroughly embraced this component of our humanity and have accom-

Working with plants in isolated, impoverished settings is not a radical affirmation of our connection with nature and our ability to design both physical and social systems based on accurate observation. Compromise on this front is complicity with capitalist oppression.



plished amazing things through its application. As posited by anarchist social theorist Murray Bookchin, the history of human development is the development of social institutions that successfully interface with nature in increasingly sophisticated ways, enhancing both the egalitarian components of society and the scientific.

To this end, Indigenous societies have been wildly successful. The development of Indigenous science has allowed countless societies to develop environmentally sound, sophisticated means of providing for human needs. Generally, Indigenous science consists of traditional ecological knowledge, wherein observations of the environment are embedded in cultural traditions and both preserved and added to for generations.

This practice has enabled Indigenous societies to accomplish feats such as long-term weather predictions because of the sheer volume of specific, localized data that their cultural traditions contain. Feats such as this are unreproducible by Western science due to the generalized, global nature of the data it can accumulate.

The impetus to accurately interface society with nature is an Indigenous principle that was responsible for the genesis of permaculture. Unfortunately, permaculture has moved further and further from its intended purpose.

While at the superficial level permaculture still embraces the material principles observed in nature, it has embraced the social systems of capitalism in seemingly subtle ways. Mainstream permaculture discourse does not examine the social constructs and history that produces capitalist systems of private property and ownership, and the privilege, oppression, and enforcement that these systems entail. This is a critical error.

Permaculture cannot achieve its purpose of the environmentally-sound material fulfillment of human needs from within the confines of private properties. The holistic material systems and nature-based societies that permaculture can facilitate are impossible in a landscape carved up by arbitrary delineations based on an abstract economic system.

These property lines have nothing to do with the material reality of the landscape and its ecosystems, of which permaculture is primarily concerned. This is an unavoidable problem for permaculture: a discourse that directly opposes this system of oppression and land-withholding must be devel-

oped in a permaculture context. Otherwise, the discourse of permaculture will continue to degrade, confined to providing nature-based design science for the privileged and well-to-do, enabling them to live more ethical lives in closer proximity to nature while those without privilege remain excluded.

Without land ownership, the ability to practice permaculture is extremely limited. The strategy for circumventing this reality is glaringly absent from contemporary permaculture discourse. Growing vegetables in pots on a windowsill or balcony is not permaculture.

Growing vegetables in your backyard, surrounded by established fruit trees and supporting plant guilds, but still buying food from hundreds of miles away is not permaculture.

The rhetoric that claims, "you can do permaculture anywhere!" is overlooking the human impetus to have a subsistence relationship with nature and the original purpose of permaculture to provide it. Working with plants in isolated, impoverished settings is not a radical affirmation of our connection with nature and our ability to design both physical and social systems based on accurate observation. Compromise on this front is complicity with capitalist oppression.

Without confronting these social realities and their physical manifestations, permaculture cannot achieve its goals of providing nature-based design science for humanity. The avoidance of this reality has left the stakes at their zenith. Without a radical liberatory discourse, permaculture will forget its purpose, be swallowed by capitalism, and cease to exist.

To avoid this fate, permaculture methodology must integrate radical, lucid social observations. Permaculture has the unique potential to recognize and analyze the synonymous nature between social causes and environmental ones. Accordingly, a revision of fundamental permaculture methodology is required. Zone and sector analysis utilized by permaculture designers employs the assumption that the designer is working from within the confines of a private property.

This basic assumption must be eliminated to achieve the goals to which permaculture professes to aspire. Otherwise, these boundaries, enforced by capitalist hegemony, confine

the permaculture practitioner's imagination indelibly.

Designers need to lift their imaginations to the entirety of the watershed, to develop a science for the design of material systems that discards arbitrary borders including those of the nation state, and rigorously examines the delineation of territories, based both on social and physical realities. Nothing short of this rigor will oppose both the domination of our minds and spaces.

Self-determination and shared responsibility create the conditions necessary for the creation of systems that truly reflect the evolutionary mechanisms of nature, for this is how our species evolved to operate within its confines.

Human ingenuity and accurate scientific examination and design can only exist in circumstances of shared commonality, whereas private property places inherent limitations on our creative abilities, relegating us to self-absorbed organisms.

Permaculture possesses the scientific methodology to oppose the systems of private property and posit a radical alternative in terms of systems design, resource management, and attendant social systems, but it has hitherto failed to do so. This must change and permaculture must utilize all its knowledge for the task of opposing capitalism and liberating our fellow humans and the earth.

Designing plant guilds, eating home-grown fruits and vegetables, and enabling the middle and upper classes to live close to nature is *not enough*.

Only when permaculture embraces a liberatory, anarchist social discourse in radical opposition to global capitalism and systems of ownership, can it truly fulfill its purpose. It is the only fate befitting a discipline adopted from Indigenous science.

Max Shaver is an anarchist student and thinker in the Pacific Northwest.



How political violence & resistance was represented in 1960s & 1970s arthouse & cult films

Revolution in 35mm: Political Violence and Resistance in Cinema From the Arthouse to the Grindhouse 1960-1990

Editors: Andrew Nette and Samm Deighan
PM Press, 2024

HANK KENNEDY

“Leftist terrorism and state terrorism, even if their motivations cannot be compared, are two jaws of the same mug’s game. The state hates terrorism, but prefers it to revolution.” So says Buenaventura Diaz in the 1974 French/Italian co-production *Nada*, one of the dozens of films profiled in *Revolution in 35mm*, edited by Andrew Nette and Samm Deighan.

Nette is no stranger to sifting through pop cultural detritus to find revolutionary messages. His previous three books for PM Press covered similar topics in pulp novels and the New Wave of science fiction. The two editors contribute most of the pieces within, but there are spaces for other talented writers to shine.

The book begins with the oeuvre of Gillo Pontecorvo, most famous for directing 1966’s *Battle of Algiers*, one the most iconic films of colonial revolt. In between the longer chapters are shorter outtakes that cover one film or a few films at a time, rather than a genre. Even if one hasn’t seen the films discussed, the editors generously supply over 200 production stills and posters from around the world that give a sense of each film’s visuals and tone.

Genre is no object for the films covered. Neither is the often-thin line between the grindhouse and arthouse. Contributors look at films from the somewhat mainstream spaghetti Westerns to the much more obscure Indian gangster movies. Political violence and resistance are a large umbrella that many films can, and do, fit into. The publisher’s description notes that “the book examines filmmaking movements like the French, Japanese, German, and Yugoslavian New



like the Red Army Faction (the Baader-Meinhoff Gang) and the Revolutionary Cells waged war

against the postwar state. In Italy, the Years of Lead from the late 1960s until the late '80s were replayed on movie screens in *poliziotteschi*, films that pitted hardboiled cops against the political establishment and right-wing conspirators. "Are you asking us to investigate or to overthrow the government?" asks one beleaguered police superintendent in Sergio Martino's "Suspicious Death of a Minor." The attitude of these films followed the old Latin phrase: "Let justice be done though the heavens fall."

Some of the best essays include focus on one film or a small group of films. Greek-Australian novelist Christos Tsiolkas explores his complicated feelings towards "Z," the 1969 Costa-Gavras anti-Greek junta film which has acquired a reputation of being immune from criticism.

Cultural commentator Annie Rose Malement attempts to rehabilitate one of the most despised subgenres in exploitation cinema: the rape/revenge film. Exemplified by the 1978 American production, "I Spit On Your Grave," the genre came under attack from both conservative moral guardians and feminist activists. Malement analyzes the films through the lens of Valerie Solanus's *SCUM Manifesto* (Society for Cutting Up Men) that argues men have ruined the world, and finds much to recommend in them.

Even the shlocky 1974 "Rape Squad" (also listed by the less outrageous title, "Act of Vengeance") is praised for referencing Chicago Women Against Rape and Sisters of Color Ending Sexual Assault for its plot featuring a group of rape victims taking bloody direct action against a serial rapist.

Writer Robert Skvarla takes an interesting look at another much-ma-

igned genre, Italian mondo films. Essentially over-the-top exploitive documentaries, mondos earned a reputation for racism and colonialism due to films like 1966's "Africa Addio" (Goodbye Africa). That film was picketed by abolitionist and former Black Panther Angela Davis in East Berlin over its alleged racism the year of the film's release.

By contrast, Svarkla views the film as an attack on European colonialism, one that places the blame for the continent's violence on European exploitation. He makes the case for the '80s mondo film "The Killing of America" as "one of the most damning indictments of America ever made."

How did contemporary radicals feel about the films profiled in this book? The record is mixed. For one, the Black Panthers thrilled to Melvin van Peebles's "Sweet Sweetback's Baadasssss Song," recommending the film on the front page of their party's newspaper. On the other hand, one student radical criticized the film "The Strawberry Statement," based on the 1968 Columbia University occupation, as "a cheap attempt at the commercial co-option and exploitation of the anguish of a generation."

In their introduction, editors Nette and Deighan argue that films from the fringes are just as worthwhile of critical attention as the blockbusters and critical darlings. Their book gives that attention to many under-seen and under-appreciated films.

Revolution in 35mm covers enough films in its 350 pages for a year's worth of viewings. It would make for a great alternative to the standard film curriculums with their "Citizen Kane" or "Birth of a Nation." It challenges a reader of the book to resist making a list, mental or physical, of films they would want to watch. I know I couldn't.

Hank Kennedy is a Metro Detroit activist who writes regularly on comics, film, and their connections to politics.

Waves; sub-genres like spaghetti westerns, Italian *poliziotteschi*, Blaxploitation, and mondo movies; and films that reflect the values of specific movements, including feminists, Vietnam War protesters, and Black militants." At the same time that Hollywood was pushing saccharine films in the mid-1960s like "The Sound of Music," outsiders were crafting films that went far beyond even the supposed rebelliousness of the New Hollywood of Coppola and Scorsese.

The time frame covered by *Revolution in 35mm* spans the colonial revolts that put the final nails in classic European imperialism's coffin to the collapse of the Soviet Union heralding the end of the Cold War. It's clear from contributor Matthew Kowalski discussions of the Yugoslavian New Wave that "actually existing socialism" was just as ripe for counter-cultural films as the capitalist West.

Trying to make films under authoritarian regimes is a recurrent theme of the book. Brazilian Directors Glauber Rocha and Jose Mojica Martins dealt with their U.S. backed junta. Lino Brocka struggled to realize his vision under the Marcos dictatorship (also U.S. backed) in the Philippines. Certainly, living in the Communist Bloc allowed for little freedom of artistic expression during the Cold War. For instance, the New Wave in Yugoslavia came under heavy official pressure. Andrzej Żuławski's surreal horror film *The Devil* was banned in his native Poland.

Nor were the capitalist democracies an easy place to make films. German filmmakers grappled with the legacies of Nazism and the inadequate de-Nazification all the while urban guerrillas

Harold and Maude & GENERATION DEATH

DEEP STRAWBERRY

In the 1971 movie, *Harold and Maude*, a boy-man sewn into an upper class lineage headed by a satirically tyrannical matriarch stages his own suicide again and again. The first scene depicts his fake self-hanging, "OH HARRROLD!" His mother's admonishment is delivered with all the horror-shock Harold meant for her, but also cloying authority, the absolute order Harold cannot escape.

Harold meets Maude in a cemetery. Maude is a free bird, an 80 year old eccentric, adorable with twisted, pinned braids. She is widely cited as the original Manic Pixie Dream Girl (i.e. the stereotypical woman in film whose function is to teach a man lessons upliftingly). They fall in love.

Harold's suicidal impulse is immediately relatable to those born in Generation X. People born between 1965 and 1980 were weaned on late stage capitalism that bloomed floridly into representational capitalism from which it looks

likes there is no going back.

The Gen X Three Horsemen of the Apocalypse, Curtis Yarvin, Peter Theil, Elon Musk are like the children of Harold and Maude's bad divorce. In this alternative timeline, both regress back to acting out: Harold performs nihilism again and again and again and again, Maude trills liberally past a graveyard of 20th century soldiers, "Oh how the world loves a cage!" as if her own essence delusionally contains freedom, as if her desire for it will break its bars. If we only just all drank Oat Straw tea. Or went to Burning Man. Or popped a metformin, Theil's anti-aging wonder drug.

The Thanatos generation is meant for The End. They anxiously harbored in the end of the 20th century, and immediately: explosions, wars, militarized anti-protest violence, killings by racist police, neoliberalism, social media addiction, widespread disease, weather emergencies, and Trump. Thanatos is in the generation's music, the synthesized soundtrack for a New Order everyone already agreed was dystopian.

It seems now all of us fetishize apocalypse, thirst for it.



"The Bond" - Patricia Piccinini

It's not a position, it's a disposition, an orientation become the best/only philosophy (some time I'll write about the difference between nihilism and pessimism, perhaps the real essay).

We can distinguish this Thanatos two ways borrowing Nietzsche's categories. Dionysian accelerationism feels like disturbing soil underground so new growth can alchemize. Apollonian accelerationism shoots humanity straight to the sun, or in Musk's wetdream, to Mars.

These Three Horsemen found a way to survive nihilism through money and for their men, created the Alt-Right Manosphere, so they too could survive. Any young man can now morph from an internet-addicted, "low value" nobody into a weightlifter who reads pseudo-philosophy or fascist philosophy, or maybe Trad Cath esotericism or Norse god shit, and deserves what is rightfully his.

Both classes turn their Thanatos, which is essentially the fate of being born into late capitalism and swallowed by it, back onto us. For any non-male, non-white person, the vibe is instantly recognizable. They want to conquer/kill us. The Horsemen are only helping the footsoldiers of their territory.

What fulminated though the internet is terrifyingly leaking. It rode in on weight lifting accounts, bro podcasts, esoteric self help, European heritage instagram, racist memes, Savitri Devi, Bronze Age Mindset, Nick Land, Julius Evola, Ernst Junger, ecofascism, rightwing antiglobalization, trad wives and their hippie homebirth counterparts, the illiberal regimes of Europe...and it's Nazism.

The book *Black Pill: How I Witness the Darkest Corners of the Internet Come to Life, Poison Society, and Capture American Politics* adds first-hand account of Charlottesville, and its internet build-up phase involving the Proud Boys, Richard Spencer and Four Chan. All bros across the board, excruciatingly organized around masculinity.

It's Nazism but also regular patriarchy, colonialism and stupid old capitalism. They call it Darwinism, which is where gender essentialism comes in— Alpha/Chad, Divine Feminine, survival of the fittest, Blood and Soil, it's only natural, Nature. Capitalism is the *order of the things*, Yarvin rolls his eyes.

The thing boys may not know about the Manic Pixie Dream Girl is that her mania is triggered by deathiness. Her life, reproducing, creative energy explodes to sparkles around the heavy, unmutable arrow of masculine countenance. Maude's vitality is reaction formation to the 20th century. It took thirty or so times watching *Harold and Maude* for me to notice the numbers tattooed on her forearm. Maude is a Holocaust survivor, she's giving Harold the gift of trauma-magic.

The scene is the day of Maude's 80th birthday. She has chosen this day for her actual death, in a radical decision to seize autonomy over the length of her life. "I took the pills and hour ago" (*transatlantic cinema accent*). A heart-wrench-

ing Cat Stevens music sequence depicting Harold's desperate and grievous Emergency Room attempt, then upon its failure, a rain-soaked drive in his DIY hearse-sportscar. We watch (in tears) the car accelerate and fly off a cliff.

All is lost. Both characters. Liberalism, she's gone, as is her lover. Then we see Harold strumming a banjo, silly-dancing on a Big Sur cliff. His final performance. He escaped the finality of his *real* deathwish.

As much as the frozen hearse/Jag in the air before its fall is the perfect image of American Left now, I want instead to focus on the banjo playing. Maude's manic pixie liberation set Harold free of his Fluxus badassery to be a life-desiring hippie who plays banjo.

The point is, they are *both* performance artists. It was all representation. Just like we know by barely scratching with one nail, that underneath the twisty language of "libertarianism," Big Tech is neocolonialism. Scratch scratch, data mining, surveillance, enslaved African miners, unlimited expansion, population control. The Horsemen are two white lads from South Africa and one contrarian grandson of communists/son of a government worker. It seems unclear if the Horsemen are accelerationists or marketers, selling us back our endtime feelings for their own gain.

We *also* know that every person defeated by that which liberalism's performance art has (barely) obscured for a few short years, has liked, shared or happy-posted Luigi Manigone. Luigi is the alpha and omega. He did the deed and also performed it. He literally won the internet. It carried, memed, and lauded his actual radical act.

Insofar as it set off *that*, rather than something else, his action was pacified (for now) by representational logic, that is, an emetic discharge of feeling. Its legacy is carried by the Thanatos generation's main accomplishment—the internet. It was sadomasochistic as an excellent tweet that rewrites justice in short, sweet poetry, mean and perfect as Curtis Yarvin's writing (or his pink mirror, Joshua Clover's). But why not kill Musk? Theil? Trump? Who even *has the power* in the afterlife of Harold and Maude? Like if Maude lived. What would they do together?

Go to the theatre, obviously.

One idea. Let's perform the end. Every party, every rave, night club and dinner will enact: less species, more human violence, starvation, foraging, a heating environment. In collectively creating our end, maybe we will find not only satisfaction (finally), but a new relationship to the end that might suggest a way through.

The real gift Maude gave Harold was recognizing the autonomy denied to him. It may not be 20th century manic pixie liberation, but we know not yet just who we'll meet.

Deep Strawberry is the author of *The Canterbury Tales* and *Tropic of Capricorn*, as well as director of *Masculin Féminin* by Jean-Luc Godard.

In a discussion during the early winter of 2024 with radical political scientist Richard Gilman-Opalsky facilitated through Incite Seminars, there arose the essential thread of imagination and its usefulness as a tool for decolonization, along with the reaffirmation of future potentialities hidden within playful and creative anti-capitalist exercises.

Anarchism and its practice, oft criticized by the unimaginative for its supposed imagined utopias, Gilman-Opalsky posited the opposing arguments in framing imaginary power being wholly essential to the progress of emancipation and revolution. Black futurism as well as black anarchism since their inception, have worked

to achieve similar ends through imagined means, first by embracing concrete functions of science, practice, and lived experience.

So enters Rasheeda Phillips' 2025 publication. Through the exploration of methods of resistance to dominant worldviews, there is the continual thread of dismantling the master's house (a reference to Audre Lorde's 1984 essay, *The Masters Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House*) in Phillips' experimental and artistic new book.

Her work is an exercise in and of itself that explores the functionality and presence of time. Due to the deeply held rapture cultural influence and beliefs present within Eurocentric cultures, the book posits that there are often inaccurate assumptions and therefore conclusions of time's presence in life.

Phillips' many interpretations of quantum theory may help to ameliorate and turn back these inherent defects on our collective perception. Whether one has familiarity with quantum theory or not, the reader is brought through the back door into understanding these precepts behind such theories and their scientific evolution. This is done through an artistic approach and spans an array of disciplines.

This is an ambitious project (to say the least) that Phillips has taken on, and one that is tackled

methodically by a patient writer and artist. A kaleidoscopic invitation into the arts, the work posits that the reader maintain discipline in imagination and curiosity long enough to follow through the maze of Phillips' interests.

No matter the proclivities or background disciplines of the reader, there is something for all. Those seeking simplistic directives in their reading will find

the wild thought and potentially discursive subject matter a frustration. If willing, however, to engage with the text and its concepts, the reward is a potentially new understanding of time itself.

And, what better expenditure (the book would challenge the concept of this noun and its relation to capitalism) of one's time, than to utilize it learning a wholly new and

prismatic worldview through the engaging and artistic mind of Rasheedah Phillips. In her conceptual project that is this book, as well as the rest of her artistic life, time is an engaging creature that comes with the morphological features developed from every facet of culture, race, space, and time.

In one chapter alone, *CPT Symmetry and Violations of Black Space Time*, Phillips moves from the music of Herbie Hancock, to the origins of clocks and black clock-makers, to biblical history, to NASA projects and the work of black aerospace workers, to early slaveholder accounts, while managing to draw connective threads between them all.

Phillips provides many examples of straight-line narrative theory most prevalent in writing and story telling techniques within a Western framework. In doing so, these essays step outside of dominant concepts to investigate techniques used throughout the African diaspora that move in a nonlinear fashion, and show how science fiction and fantasy culture are themselves essential tenets of black art making.

It is through the multi disciplinarian after all, that the world has seen some of its best expressions of anarchism. To enter into the discussion with the work of emancipation, decolonization, and anti-capitalist movements as anarchism at its best attempts to do, is



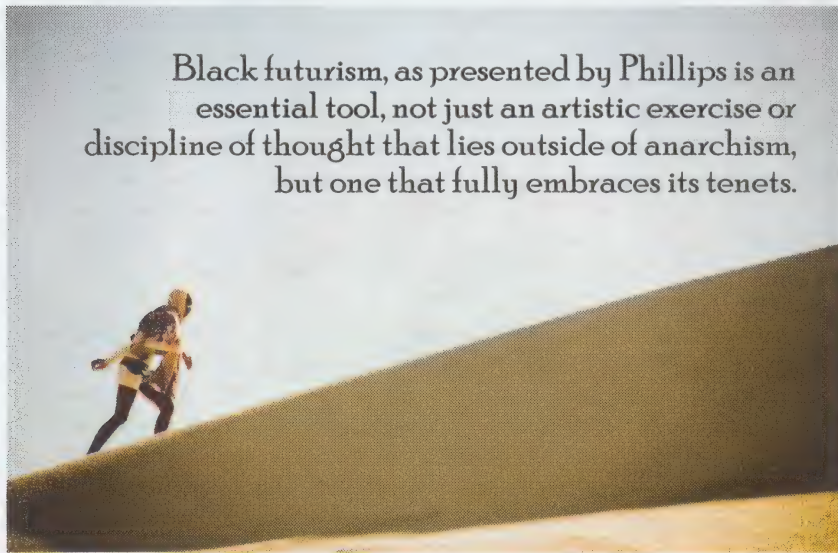
Dismantling the Master's Clock, On Race, Space, and Time
Rasheedah Phillips
AK Press, 2025

the necessity for imagining new futures. Black futurism as presented by Phillips is therefore an essential tool, not just an artistic exercise or discipline of thought that lies outside of anarchism, but one that fully embraces its tenets.

Drawing from Swahili, Yoruba, Malian and Mandinkan traditions, Phillips casts a net deep across many oceans, calling time and storytelling to the task. The use of the loose rule of threes in the diction in many given examples throughout the text creates a curious poetic rhythm to the essays. Examples in threes for the storyteller act as a reasoning and rhyming method in and of itself.

As deeply investigative as Phillips is in terms of rooting

Black futurism, as presented by Phillips is an essential tool, not just an artistic exercise or discipline of thought that lies outside of anarchism, but one that fully embraces its tenets.



out cultural perceptions of time, it makes sense that the book is not intended to be read in a linear fashion either. The reader is directed to vertical and horizontal reads that result in a cosmogram a two-dimensional representation of a dynamic and multidimensional framework.. Subheadings of chapters reflect the authors various interests from music, anthropology, poetics, and science fiction.

The oft appearing acronyms that appear throughout the text relating to various disciplines of Phillips, become their own language. They are a linguistic invitation into other circles of thought and their interrelation. The benefits of bending times arrow (a conceit threaded throughout the text) through creative pursuits such as music and storytelling are brought to the fore through quantum theory.

One is required to use the imagination to entertain and enact these processes of thinking, and that invitation is extended throughout the text. To use Phillips' oft appearing acronymic rhythm, I started reading his book at the end of the baseball season.

Let me provide an allegorical story to illustrate the use of

quantum theory here: In coastal New Jersey, I watched two teams play. On one batter's shin was inked a clock face stuck at the hour 2:45. He kept hitting balls out into the darkness toward the nearby beach huts while the Atlantic churned in the background.

Logic might apply here, and one might assume that a few balls might be lost forever to laziness or to their rolling into a storm drain and shooting out to sea. But through the variety of human will present, various figures brought the balls back by bicycle, on foot, even crawling under fences sometimes to retrieve them.

Applying the frame of mind that embraces quantum thinking to this game of baseball here makes sense. The clock face never moved from 2:45 on the man's leg even as he moved, and the ball always came back to the batter, despite his efforts to get rid of the thing. Entropy and expansion, physics and its results, time moving in nonlinear fashion; these are the tools of thinking needed at this time, at any time, where we should all be required to think beyond constructs.

As David Byrne sings, "Time isn't holding up, time isn't after us." Reading *Dismantling the Master's Clock* gives the pervasive sense that the utility of quantum mechanics is one of the only functionally relatable, and quantifiable tools we can employ to understand time, the human, and the world in a full way.

Rasheeda Phillips shows the necessity for reimagining and reengaging with the perceptions and conceptions of assumed reality that is hitting the ball out into space, and divining the future.

Emma Weiss is a writer, musician, and spoken word poet from Rhode Island. Her work focuses on personal essay and cultural critique written within the working class. She works in the trades as a carpenter restoring old homes. As a lifelong un-schooler she has a passion for anti-authoritarian methods of self-education. She writes at thesolidpage.substack.com.

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OUT OF THE FOG

RON SAKOLSKY

On Jan. 1, 2024, the city of San Francisco sent New Year's greetings to its beleaguered citizens with the cheery news that a suicide net had been installed under the Golden Gate Bridge thanks to funding from the California Mental Health Services Act.

Heralded as a "suicide deterrent system," the supposedly solid rationale behind this marine grade stainless steel safety net, upon closer examination, turns out to be not so surprisingly full of holes. The erstwhile proponents of this costly \$217 million bridge boondoggle have simplistically argued that if access to the material means of suicide are reduced, then deaths can be prevented. Just put up a net under the bridge to catch would-be suicides. . . presto, problem solved!

The underlying impetus for this precautionary measure seems to have been that such unsightly suicides must at all costs be kept out of public view because they might be upsetting to the more squeamish conventional users of the bridge. After all, those passersby with delicate sensibilities might even get triggered into feeling that something was dreadfully wrong in society at large.

Now, we can't have that, can we? Of course, there are some potential jumpers who look favorably on the idea of committing suicide by poetically descending to their death on a foggy night, and are determined to use the iconic bridge as a mortal coil toward that end. Such impassioned jumpers might consider such a watery scenario to be a very romantic way of checking out. However, to the very unromantic politicians and bureaucrats in charge of policing the contours of miserabilist reality on behalf of bourgeois morality, such a cavalier attitude toward death cannot be tolerated, even as a final self-determining gesture of autonomous defiance.

Most suicides do not have such a bohemian pedigree. Yet, even when judged by mainstream do-gooder standards, it's hard to think of a more egregious example of the dead-end (so to speak) policies of liberal reformism than the San Francisco suicide nets. Constructing such nets under the Golden Gate Bridge offers little more than a whack-a-

mole non-solution to what is largely the individual result of the myriad socio-political problems endemic to urban life amidst the growing devastation of too-late capitalism.

Instead of addressing the deeply embedded roots of the problem, the city's superficially-minded "golden-gate-keepers" seem to have been hoping to proactively avoid having to constantly deal with the ongoing suicidal deluge by preventing jumper access in the first place. Just take the lethal launching pad of the bridge away and the problem disappears, right? As if a reliance on such a short-sighted technical solution which mistakenly treats symptom as cause was not enough to make you want to pull out your hair in frustration or roll on the floor in convulsive laughter, even more ludicrous is their argument that such a cosmetic safety net strategy will lower the number of future suicides in San Francisco as a whole. Alas, it is far more likely that those who once contemplated suicide by jumping off the Golden Gate Bridge will now do the suicidal deed at some other location and/or in some other way.

Actually, there are not now, and never can be, unimpeachable statistics that would prove the safety net advocates' wishful theoretical speculations on this matter. One thing is clear: verifiable cause and effect statistics in relation to those refraining from suicide now that bridge-leaping access has disappeared can never be found. Aside from the posthumous discovery of a random suicide note, the unearthing of a handwritten journal entry or finding the occasional personal online post to that contraceptive effect dated prior to taking one's own life, there is no way of objectively uncovering the pre-suicide choice process in most cases. As the saying goes, "dead men tell no tales."

Those physically caught in the act can be counted, but, even if they remain alive, their preliminary calculations in choosing to commit suicide at one locale rather than another are not always forthcoming or reliable. Consequently, the case for safety nets can never be statistically proven one way or another because of the inevitable lack of hard data. Indeed, the most likely "net" result of such a "catch-as-catch-can" bridge safety program in relation to overall suicide prevention will be to privatize the act or to move it to another less publicly monitored location rather than to actually

prevent it from taking place at all. Much like the unsettling evidence of the daily carnage on our highways that is immediately cleaned up so as to officially project a deceptive “nothing to see here, folks” impression on rubbernecking drivers; the name of the game is out of sight, out of mind.

One wonders further if the vaunted San Francisco suicide management plan was designed to take advantage of the survivor’s guilt experienced by certain friends and relatives of jumpers under the pretext of humanitarian policy-making, while offering the politicians that have funded it a chance to make some easy virtue-signaling points with prospective voters over the dead bodies of their constituents without actually having to change anything of substance.

Even as the degree of societally normalized alienation and spiritual emptiness reaches staggering new heights of existential malaise, Rimbaud’s call to “change life” still lamently remains unheeded for the most part.

In the context of the current war on the imagination, we are expected to acquiescently adjust to a toxic reality where the natural world of which we are a part is being crushed before our eyes and the civilized world is becoming ever more unnatural as the carceral forces of instrumental reason virtually invade and surveil every nook and cranny of not only our dreams and ultimately our deaths.

Of course, there is no guarantee in advance that even if the present order was magically transformed along anarchist lines that an individual wanting to plummet to their death by plunging into the murky waters of the San Francisco Bay would necessarily change their mind. However, I’m willing to wager that the collective impact of moving in such an anarchic direction would be vastly more life-affirming than putting up a leaky safety net under the Golden Gate Bridge to discourage potential suicides.

In comparison, the latter net-building strategy makes about as much sense as putting old fashioned cowcatchers on the front-end of trains in the New York City subway system to prevent the many suicides each year resulting from people jumping onto the tracks from station platforms as the trains come roaring into each stop.

In a coldly disenchanting techno-capitalist world where despair can be an omnipresent companion, suicide inevitably looms up as the last refuge of refusal. Is it any wonder that, when faced with a life of constant emotional pain, some of the most sensitive among us will find the finality of suicide inviting?

Under such circumstances, the beckoning appeal of suicide is not likely to disappear, or to be disappeared, in the name of civic responsibility. The last thing we need is another plea, petition, or demand that encourages grandstanding government intervention or “responsible” corporate citizenship.

Instead of trying to architecturally discourage despondent jumpers from doing a swan dive off the Golden Gate Bridge,

we might do better to radically re-imagine both jumpers and jumping in the context of our most impossible abolitionist dreams. Bring on the subversive visions of an ungovernable world where thousands of suicidal real estate speculators and stock market wheeler/dealers do the rest of us a big favor by jumping out of office building windows with no safety net to catch them, where the rapidly spreading tendrils of utopian gardens riotously strangle the noxious weeds of colonialism, and where wildly imaginative poets have a last laugh in the face of death!

And, yes, that last laugh might be a suicidal one in some cases. In the words of the late Salt Spring Island poet Phyllis Webb in her “To Friends Who Have Also Considered Suicide” poem,

*to consider the numerous methods of killing oneself,
that is surely the finest exercise of the imagination*

Webb, who herself chose to die with medical assistance at 94, always had a soft spot in her heart for the insurrectionary anarchists Sacco and Vanzetti and for the anarchist prince, Peter Kropotkin.

In her poem, “Kropotkin”, she eulogizes,
*his white beard,
where the morning stars
sang...*

Of his older brother Alexander, who committed suicide in Siberian exile, she notes in “The Kropotkin Poems,”

*He cut his own vein
stateless in grace*

Contemporary Vancouver anarchist poet Stephen Collis has long revered Webb. In his most recent prose volume of the two that he has written about her, entitled *Almost Islands: Phyllis Webb and the Pursuit of the Unwritten*, he meditates on his relationship with her as both an anarchist-oriented poet and personal friend.

In doing so, he wisely reminds us of the anarchic qualities of the death-defying trapeze act that is the unbridgeable poetic adventure: “Poetry and anarchy. Windows we sometimes need to leap from. Names for our unnamable desires.”

And when, as Webb put it, “words no longer came” to her, she decidedly committed what Collis has called “literary suicide” by abdicating the writing of poetry altogether. Instead, she became an abstract painter who favored the anarchist-inflected notions of spontaneity and autonomy as reflected in the black mirror light of an oneiric creative process which drew upon the “pure psychic automatism” of surrealism as refracted in the “splendid anarchy” and “total refusal” of the Montréal *Automatistes*.

Ron Sakolsky lives on Denman Island, BC. He is a writer whose prose and poetry traces the confluence of anarchy and surrealism. His latest book is *Surrealism and the Anarchist Imagination* published by Eberhardt Press, 2024.

Burning Rage of a Dying Planet: The FBI vs. The Earth Liberation Front (Second Edition)

Craig Rosebraugh
Microcosm Publishing 2024.

CHRIS CLANCY

Burning *Rage of a Dying Planet* is a history of the rise of the radical environmental movement the Earth Liberation Front (ELF), as told by Craig Rosebraugh, who served as the spokesperson for the ELF during its arguably most consequential years, 1997 to late 2001.

Originally published by Lantern Books in 2004,

Burning Rage does a nice job of detailing the radical actions of the ELF, the leaderless band of environmental activists that at the turn of the century sabotaged dozens of ecologically destructive projects and organizations, mostly timber mills and farms, expanding ski resorts and gas-guzzling SUV dealerships. Arson was their primary tactic, though spiking trees, smashing glass, and pouring sugar into the fuel tanks of logging trucks and asphalt pavers were all part of the ELF repertoire. From

1997 to 2001, the ELF was responsible for over \$40 million in property damage, all without a single human or animal life lost.

One particularly interesting aspect of the book is the progress with which the ELF expanded its reach in the late 1990s, starting with tree spiking actions around the Pacific Northwest and leveling up to the burning of biotech-friendly agriculture departments within the University of Minnesota, Michigan State, and elsewhere.

Nike (for its use of child labor), McDonald's (for its clearing of rainforests to raise cattle), Old Navy (for its owner's involvement in the clearcutting of old growth forest in the Pacific Northwest)—it felt

like no corporation dependent on the exploitation of animals or wilderness was safe from stealth, dead-of-night attacks by the ELF. "If you build it, we will burn it," promised a spray-painted message on a new luxury home under construction on Long Island in 2000.

The author writes with honesty, sympathy, and admiration for the ELF during his years as its spokesperson, a role that was all but thrust upon him the day he received his first ELF communique while working as a public relations assistant with the Animal Liberation Front (ALF), a radical animal rights group with a decentralized structure similar to that of the ELF.

Because the ELF was decentralized—consisting entirely of self-funded cells made up of "elves"—it fell to Rosebraugh to step into the role of, as a December 1998 *New York Times* story put it, "the face of eco-terrorism."

"Any social or political movement or organization must constantly evaluate and re-examine its strategies and tactics to ensure effectiveness and progress toward

success," he writes. "I asked myself daily how I could assist in creating a more organized and, therefore, more effective, social change organization."

Effecting social change naturally places one in the cross hairs of authority. Rosebraugh suffered more than his share of government harassment. Surveillance, grand jury hearings, and ill-timed home, office, and vehicle raids upended the author's life during this time, disrupting not just his community work, but his day job (at a vegan bakery in Portland) and his personal affairs.

This new edition is subtitled, "The FBI vs. The Earth Liberation Front," but, in fact, Rosebraugh and the ELF took on all comers, from the Portland cops to deep-pocketed corporations to craven politicians



Fire set by ELF at Vail, Colo. ski resort in 1998. Multiple buildings were destroyed doing millions in damages.

to the mainstream media, all of which played their part in shielding corporate interests from the kind of deeper public scrutiny the ELF was trying to effect.

"I became the public face of eco-saboteurs, someone for the media to use and abuse and for the public and industry to despise," he writes.

Rosebraugh recounts an especially weird interview with ABC-TV journalist-turned-libertarian pundit John Stossel on *20/20*, who called him, "just a kid who doesn't know anything" and "a thug." This resulted in Barbara Walters saying, after the interview aired, "I find him absolutely chilling."

Such moments add color to the narrative, which, at 300-plus pages, can start to feel repetitive, as every new ELF attack brings with it a new communique, a new flurry of publicity, a fresh round of FBI questioning he endures.

So, how come Rosebraugh, in all his enthusiasm for the radical environmental movement, decided to call it quits in 2001? To his credit, the author devotes a chapter ("Stepping Down") to the fielding of this question. In speaking for the ELF during its headiest years, he argues, he had come to be seen in the eyes of the public as the leader of the entire radical environmental movement. Such a concentration of public image was not just wrong, it ran counter to the ELF's mission.

"I realized that in order for the movement to continue to grow, more people would need to speak out on behalf of the ELF," he writes. "[T]he more people who publicly spoke out on behalf of groups such as the ELF, the less able the government would be to repress and neutralize the supportive efforts."

The point here is sound. Still, one can't help but wonder if he didn't experience that most common of life maladies: professional burnout.

In any event, his timing was fantastic. On September 5, 2001, Rosebraugh released a statement saying he would no longer be running the North American Earth Liberation Front press office. One week later, the menace implied in the already loaded media and law enforcement terms, "eco-terrorist" and "domestic terrorist groups" began growing exponentially. The ELF, once merely notorious, was now downright toxic to the authorities.

"Even during this hour of national crisis, ELF and ALF continue to terrorize Americans in pursuit of their militant agenda," went an October 2001 letter from U.S. Congressman Scott McInnis that called for "key environmental organizations" to publicly disavow the actions of the ELF and the ALF.

Not long after, authorities began making significant strides in their ELF investigations with a pair of key arrests of ELF activists in Portland, Ore. and the gain of a confidential informant in Eugene, Ore. In late 2005 and early 2006, as part of the FBI's "Operation Backfire," U.S. grand juries indicted a total of 18 activists on charges related to

"violent acts in the name of animal rights and environmental causes."

"At best, the Earth Liberation Front was a source of inspiration," Rosebraugh writes. "It was an example of people being so upset at the powers that be ruining our world that they decided to do something different about it. The main problem with their strategy is that, for it to work, it requires—as history has shown—a strong, diverse, and open-minded mass movement, one that understands a diversity of tactics is required for any change to occur. And that movement didn't exist."

Microcosm Publishing's new edition of *Burning Rage* includes a host of add-ons to the original text, including an updated timeline of ELF activities and a short foreword from British writer and environmental activist Tamsin Omond.

A new prologue by Rosebraugh recounts, in fascinating detail, the FBI's PSYOP-lite ruse to get him to spill ELF secrets via a phony book publishing deal. Even if you've read *Burning Rage of a Dying Planet* at some point in the last twenty years, the account of this bizarre episode alone makes it worth revisiting.

Christopher Clancy is the author of the anti-war dystopian thriller *We Take Care of Our Own*. He lives in Nashville.



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Naomi Klein on creating an “unselfing”
to establish solidarity & community

Neoliberalism's Double Lives



Doppelganger: A Trip into the Mirror World

Naomi Klein

Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2023

MAX REYNARD

Naomi Klein's most recent book is a worthwhile analysis of fascist and reactionary organizing that began with the Covid-19 pandemic and continues to the present. Encompassing both liberatory and electoral politics, her jumping off point is the persistent confusion in public between herself and highbrow feminist-cum-MAGA acolyte, Naomi Wolf. But this is like the McGuffin in a detective story: it's the animating ghost—doppelgangers often showing up as poltergeists—that takes us through a much more interesting journey than the initial question portends.

Klein first examines the “diagonalist” alignment in the Covid pandemic between wellness quasi-progressives and the anti-government Right. She's incisive here about the mainstream political failing during this time period. While the summer of 2020 saw the largest civil rights movement in U.S. history—the George Floyd protests, primarily built and organized by women of color—both progressive and radical responses to the pandemic were often incoherent. Appalled at the Hobbesian everyone-for-themselves attitude of the Right, many mainstream progressives over-corrected, ceding moral authority to the state and the scientific establishment.

For instance, in decades past, both progressives and radicals had correctly

organized against exploitations like patenting-and-profiting from medications and had long and legitimate suspicions of public health campaigns that disregarded or actively harmed—purposely infected, systematically sterilized—people of color and poor communities. But when individuals were worried about receiving new vaccines backed by both Big Pharma and the state, the only place discussing their fears was the conspiratorial Right.

While some activists mocked those who saw smartphone vaccine passport apps as an arm of the Deep State, they often were the same people who had spent the previous decade raising alarms about the power of billionaire tech moguls and the state's surveillance apparatus. Is it any wonder that some people mapped those concerns onto imaginary schemes by Bill Gates and the World Health Organization?

Conspiracies, Klein argues, identify the symptoms, but misdiagnose the sickness. It's capitalism and state power, in the form of neoliberalism, that generate our accurate feelings of being alienated and regulated.

It was capitalism that so effectively convinced USers to prioritize self-reliant individualism above all else. So, the idea of communal sacrifice, doing something for your potentially immunocompromised neighbors would be anathema. There was no prominent alternative vision during the early pandemic—mainstream progressives saying little when private corporations got public funding and still got to patent and profit from their vaccines.

As a result, the only outlet for frustration with the experience of a worse-than-necessary public health crisis was a radio show like Trump booster Steve Bannon's. And he, with others on the Right, welcomed their erstwhile political enemies like Naomi Wolf as proof of the rottenness of the system.

For some in the United States, the pandemic offered a momentary glimpse of another kind of society, where the state made direct cash payments to keep

people afloat, expanded public food and nutrition programs, provided nationwide lifesaving treatment while legally barring ruinous bills from hospitals and insurance companies, and paused the effects of onerous educational debt (belatedly forgiving a small portion).

Many “essential workers” did not get to spend 2020 learning to bake bread, and too many families said final goodbyes to isolated loved ones over video chat. But the seeds of something better had been planted, demonstrated as workable to a huge swath of people in the United States.

During this time, social justice activists were consumed with fighting battles over public masking. Instead, Klein argues, they could have spent that energy in demanding improved air filtration systems in schools or in paid sick leave regardless of one’s occupation: projects that would have built societal resilience, rather than putting the onus for public health on a solitary person’s actions. She effectively connects this lack of communalist approach to the continuing rise of noxious and fascist policies:

“...[C]onspiracy theories detract attention from the billionaires who fund the networks of misinformation and away from the economic policies—deregulation, privatization, austerity—that have stratified wealth so cataclysmically in the neoliberal era. They rile up anger about the Davos elites, at Big Tech and Big Pharma, but the rage never seems to reach those targets. Instead, it gets diverted into culture wars about anti-racist education, all-gender bathrooms, and Great Replacement panic directed at Black people, non-white immigrants, and Jews.”

Klein skillfully weaves together the politics of Othering—excusing racist police violence and murder, the denial of health care (or humanity) to diverse sexualities or genders, and the continuous undercurrent of anti-Semitism. In a crucial section on the history of Jewish exclusion and the apartheid and public humiliation of Palestinians under Israeli control (written before the current war on Gaza), she unpacks the seductions and failures of Zionism.

Using an analysis of the problematic Philip Roth novel of doppelgangers, *Operation Shylock: A Confession*, she describes the “ethnic doubling” that people in excluded communities have to live down: Jews as a global cabal, Arabs as terrorists-in-waiting, and Black USers as inherently dangerous. Klein connects W.E.B. DuBois’s familiar idea of the “double consciousness” to technological regulation for “predictive” policing, and political regulation like punitive refugee policies, both examples of individuals “being overtaken by the lethal racial double.”

She uses all of this to construct a political project of “unselfing.” First, she reminds us of novelist Daisy Hilliard’s conception of a “second self” that benefits from far-off wars, ecological footprints of fast fashion and global shopping, privilege born of historical financial and genocidal advantages. Klein then adds DuBois’s idea of the (dangerous) pro-

Unselfing, in the end, is a form of solidarity: rejecting the atomization of neoliberalism, patriarchy, and white supremacy, and reaching towards connection.

jected double of marginalized people:

“So many forms of doubling are ways of not looking at death/trouble. And death feels awfully close these days, as close as a fentanyl-laden pill, a heat dome, a hate crime, an intake of virally-loaded breath. . . . So, how do we stop averting our gaze?”

Unselfing, in the end, is a form of solidarity: rejecting the atomization of neoliberalism, patriarchy, and white supremacy, and reaching towards connection. It is turning away from solutions that force individuals to protect their own health, and to solutions that build collective well-being.

Does Klein sometimes seem too accommodating of electoral politics? Yes, in some brief detours to the Bernie Sanders presidential campaign. And, her career-long project of packaging radical ideas for a more mainstream audience might seem too reductionist to some, eliding the breaking points between reformist and revolutionary organizing. But the value in her book is that it reconstitutes ideas purposely scrambled by the rise of opportunistic fascism, and underscores that some aspects of an eroding world deserve to crumble.

“If there’s one thing I admire about the diagonalists. . . it’s that they still believe in the idea of changing reality, an ambition that I fear too many on this side. . . have lost. We shouldn’t make up facts like they do, but we should stop treating a great many human-made systems, like monarchies and supreme courts and borders and billionaires, as immutable and unchangeable.”

I suspect many readers have never lost the belief in the need for transformative change. With critical excavations like Klein’s, we can see how reactionary forces took advantage of unacknowledged fears to marshal a successful movement around fascist policies. This type of analysis will be invaluable moving forward, in order to shift the social environment from populist fascism to popular solidarity.

Max Reynard is currently incarcerated in a federal prison and is working on a zine about LGBTQ+ prisoners called *Queer on the Inside*.

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Exploring Solidarity and Collective Care

Jews Confronting Zionism

Taking the State Out of the Body: A Guide to Embodied Resistance to Zionism

Eliana Rubin
PM Press, 2024

DAVID FINKEL

A disclosure at the outset: Parts of this book lie outside the competence of this reviewer, notably sections at the end of each chapter called “Embodied Practices.” These are hands-on exercises intended for collective and individual healing from various forms of trauma and harm resulting from our colonial-settler, sexist, and oppressive system. Interested readers can evaluate their use for themselves.

To explain the book’s subtitle, the author writes, “Taking the state out of the body means honoring people’s individual and collective agency to shape their own lives and communities; queer diaspora is a decolonial politic that allows for complex connections to home, land, and family; and *doykeit* [Yiddish for “hereness”] is our charge as Ashkenazi Jews to resist ethnonationalism and recommit to solidarity with all oppressed peoples.”

If that passage is a bit difficult to unpack, it suggests the multiple interconnections of the book. The author explains: “Eliana builds transgressive relationships with bodies, land, and lineage through their work as a somatic practitioner, politicized facilitator, anti-Zionist organizer, full-spectrum doula, queer pleasure instigator, and land steward. Their practice centers queer and trans organizers in developing embodied leadership as well as Jewish organizers in healing intergenerational trauma for the sake of collective liberation.”

Palestine in the Spotlight

Raised in the U.S. in a family headed by two activist civil rights lawyers—the father represented Haitian detainees in Guantanamo among other causes—Rubin took up the struggle for Palestine through involvement in the International Jewish Anti-Zionist Network (IJAN) and her direct-action participation in solidarity in the occupied West Bank Palestinian villages of Ramia and Nabi Saleh.

Attempting to prevent the arrest of Bassem Tamimi, leader of nonviolent resistance and the heroic activist Tamimi family in Nabi Saleh, Rubin writes, “The next thing I knew, I had been hit over the head and was face down on the pavement, with four soldiers kicking and grabbing at me. . . I spent the following eight days lost in different army tanks, hospitals, and jail cells” and ultimately “was told my options were either to make *aliyah* (Jewish immigration to Israel) or to be deported.” Is that ironic, or what?

Chapter 1, “Calendula: Resisting Ethnonationalism,” provides a strong introduction to Zionism as a settler-colonial project from its inception and the tragedy of the incorporation of eastern European Jews, themselves escaping pogroms and brutal oppression, into what has become the Israeli state’s genocidal practice. This chapter will be particularly valuable for readers who may be relatively new to the subject, but the narrative packs a special wallop for anyone at this horrific moment of the unspeakable slaughter and destruction of Gaza.

The author recounts, “I went to a Jewish school from kindergarten through eighth grade where we pledged our allegiance to the flags of both the United States and Israel every morning” and “had ex-IDF [Israeli army] soldiers who worked as security guards at the school.”

In this connection, readers would find viewing the film “Israelism.” It documents the Zionist indoctrination of Jewish youth in the inextricable identity of the Israeli state with Judaism—which, viewed in religious terms, is surely a form of idolatry—and hopeful signs of growing sectors of Jewish youth breaking with this toxic amalgamation.

The film shows how Simone Zimmerman, raised as an ardent young Zionist activist, becomes a founder of If Not Now, which, along with Jewish Voice for Peace, has broken important ground in Jewish solidarity with Palestine. Although not mentioned in the book, anarchist activists have participated in these groups for quite a while.

In this chapter and throughout, Rubin also connects the problem of Zionism with the colonial destruction of Indigenous nations in the United States, e.g., drawing on the work of historian Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz, and other examples of ethnic cleansing and cultural annihilation such as the atrocities perpetrated against migrants on the U.S. southern border.

While the author is rightfully concerned to show Palestinians like other oppressed people as actors and resisters, not as helpless victims, the book’s attempt to touch on the catastrophe of the October 7, 2023 Hamas attack is superficial and unhelpful: “In 2023 Palestinians in Gaza returned to the wall, this time with a bulldozer, bringing it down and allowing them to break free of their open-air prison.”

As for what followed: “While nothing makes up for their loss of homes and martyrs, Palestinians continue to show incredible force as they assert their right to resist under international law.”

Upholding the right to resist, including armed action (particularly, where there’s at least a possibility of success), doesn’t absolve us of the need to assess any particular action in terms of its methods and above all its consequences.

To be sure, October 7 inflicted a massive national trauma on Israel. The 1,100 or so people killed in Israel that day slightly exceeds the Israeli deaths from the suicide bombings and other attacks of the Second Intifada between 2000 and 2005.

But if the Hamas military wing expected the Israeli state or society to collapse, or that the attack would produce an uprising throughout Palestine and a general war of Arab and Muslim nations against Israel, such a catastrophic miscalculation must have resulted from a combination of despair and apocalyptic-messianist delusion.

Gaza’s civilian population had no bomb shelters or civil defense preparation for the absolutely inevitable U.S.-funded-and-equipped Israeli genocide that followed and continues to this day with the clear purpose of destroying and depopulating Gaza.

While this brief review isn’t the place to pursue the argument, too many pro-Palestinian activists saw October 7 as an advance or victory, raising the question of how many such

victories Palestine can survive. (For this writer’s views at the beginning of the present disaster, interested readers can find my article “Apartheid on the Road to Genocide” at thecurrent.org/atc227/catastrophe-in-palestine-and-israel/.

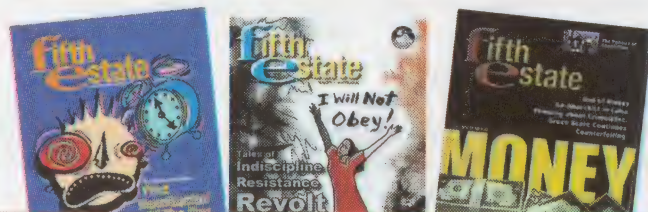
Building Connections

Beyond Rubin’s impassioned solidarity with Palestine, the book offers sensitive explorations of connections with other struggles of oppressed peoples and the need for healing from trauma that affects us all, whether we live in the society as oppressed, or as oppressor, or as Rubin would challenge us to see, as simultaneously both.

Just as this reviewer is not equipped to properly deal with the “Embodied Practices” that conclude each chapter, this is also true with respect to the connections at the beginning of each chapter with the natural world, or with the inner construction of our own bodies. Chapter 2, for example, “Redwoods: Collective Trauma,” likens the interconnections of the giant trees through fungal networks with the necessity of human “interdependence and collectivity—about widening our bodies to include the beings next to us, holding space for our ancestors, and growing together as a community, leaving nobody behind.”

These are intriguing suggestions, but for the most part the relevant biological and physiological research isn’t footnoted. Nevertheless, the book is a good start for *Fifth Estate* readers who are interested in “taking the state out of the body” and out of everything else for that matter.

David Finkel is an editor of the Detroit-based bimonthly *Against the Current* and a member of Jewish Voice for Peace-Detroit.



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In the Spirit of Anarchist Illegalism



The Man Who Robbed Banks With A Fountain Pen

To Rob a Bank Is an Honor

Lucio Urtubia, (translation Paul Sharkey)
AK Press, 2024.

THOMAS MARTIN

Lucio Urtubia's name is not well known in anarchist circles. He produced no philosophical or polemical writings, and is mainly remembered for a successful scheme to rob—not with guns, but with fake checks—one of the world's major banks.

While Urtubia and his colleagues were not much interested in classical anarchist philosophy, we can discern resonances with Stirner and Reclus, and he took literally Proudhon's axiom "Property is theft." That was philosophy enough. Illegalism, broadly defined, has been around as long as "legal" has been.

As a form of anarchist praxis it dates from the early 20th century, when the anarchist Bonnot Gang was robbing French banks, inspired by activists like Ernest Bertran and Renzo Novatore.

After World War I such expropriation activities, often combined with various direct actions including attempted assassinations, were continued by anarchists like Buenaventura Durruti and Francisco Ascaso, operating in Spain, France and Latin America in the 1920s and '30s. They were almost always associated with the Confederación Nacional del Trabajo (CNT), Spain's alliance of anarchist

labor unions and, after the defeat of the Spanish revolution, with anti-Franco activities.

Lucio Urtubia continued this illegalist approach and refined it. The Italian anarchist Alfredo Bonanno (who died in 2023) rejected most forms of organization in favor of the small affinity group, and in practice returned to the basics: armed robbery.

As late capitalism grows ever more efficient in its oppressive tactics, illegalists are emboldened. However, this autobiography is not an essay on expropriatory anarchism. Urtubia did what he thought needed doing, and didn't theorize much.

In *To Rob a Bank*, he doesn't prioritize among the many diverse events of a fascinating life. We learn as much about his childhood and family life as about his notorious career as a bank robber and activist.

The title of his book is a bit misleading as he was rather more than a bank robber. He was born in Spain's Basque country in 1931 to a family involved in smuggling as well as in radical politics, mostly in opposition to Franco's regime which began in 1939.

Conscripted into the Spanish army in the early 1950s, Urtubia was able to steal military food supplies for redistribution to the poor. He worked with, but did not formally join, either the CNT or with the Grupos de Acción Revolucionaria Internacionalista, GARI (Internationalist Revolutionary Action Groups), organizations opposed to Franco. His smuggling activities being detected, Urtubia fled to France in 1954.

As a refugee in Paris, where he spent the rest of his life, he worked as a bricklayer and broadened his activities with anarchist and labor organizations in both France and Spain.

Not much is said about French politics, but a great deal about construction and bricklaying techniques, his marriage and daughter, and the occasional kidnapping and bank robbery. Like many anarchists, Urtubia learned the printing



This arm belongs to a prisoner subscriber who had the tattoo of the Fifth Estate logo done while locked down in the American gulag.

trade and used his new skill to produce a variety of anarchist broadsheets and newsletters. He also became an expert forger, producing all manner of documents from passports to drivers' licenses over a period of some thirty years starting in the mid-fifties. The profits mostly went to anti-Franco fighters.

The chapters on the revolutionary events of May 1968 in Paris give us the perspective of a proletarian participant, rather different from that of the students and academics—many from privileged backgrounds—who led the strikes. Urtubia worked with several different groups of strikers, where he was needed. He printed posters,

introduced speakers at rallies (he was never a main speaker himself). "I felt very far removed from them all, but I can tell you that I was excellent at using my pick to dig up the cobbles and tarmac from the streets."

The author's most noteworthy undertaking, which brought international notoriety, was the Citibank escapade of the late 'seventies and early 'eighties. He calls himself "the dunce in the pack" of conspirators who came up with the idea of counterfeiting traveler's checks.

None of the money went for personal gain, but to radical and humanitarian causes as well as the ETA (Euskadi Ta Askatasuna, the Basque separatist group) in Spain and the Black Panthers in the United States. He paraphrases Elisé Reclus to the effect that theft is moral when the proceeds go to social causes. "[S]tealing a poor old lady's handbag is one thing and robbing one of the world's major banks is quite another."

The scheme was so successful that it brought Citibank to the verge of collapse until one of the conspirators betrayed his comrades. However, anarchist decentralization paid off; the police were never able to find Urtubia's plates, and he eventually made a deal that got him out of prison. Connections with high officials in France's socialist government helped. That seems rather un-anarchist, but he never claimed ideological consistency. Throughout the book, Urtubia comes across as a happy man, comfortable in his work, and a talented storyteller. He knows the victory may never come, but it's the effort that matters.

In 1991, he opened L'Espace Louise-Michel, named for

the great anarchist activist in the Paris Commune of 1871.

He did much of the physical work of renovating the dilapidated building himself. This community center is still in operation on anarchist principles, offering, according to its website, "information, orientation, games, a library, community activities, residents' projects, leisure activities."

See ville-meaux.fr/ then Chercher Louise Michel

Urtubia is the subject of the documentary *Lucio* (2007), available on YouTube in Spanish, and the more recent Netflix film *A Man of Action* (2022). Both focus on the Citibank scheme, while not denying his anarchist motives. The last section of *To Rob a Bank* explains how the documentary came about.

Thomas Martin teaches American history at Sinclair College in Dayton, Ohio, striving to undo everything the students learned in high school.

i was a teenage caricature

MK ZARIEL

is the might of restraint closing in on me simply
a problem of synaesthesia? of this Autistic mind making life
hellish for its inhabitant—or is this unshakable weight
about statism? apparently the control industry &
gatekeepers well versed in verbal bandages
in therapy speak, conditioning into agony
are the ones to ask—am i the weird one?

it must be easy to call me the problem
troubled teen caricature, flickering in and out of
the public imagination—to upend all control must be
a dream of supposed insurgents at 1am
and you prescribe me deep breaths and sunlight

forced smiles, affirmations by google
but what if it was control that made us sick?
to be closed in, repressed, gendered by the suffocating—
do not simply recommend us artificial oxygen
but release your grip,
and let our trans bodies breathe.

mk zariel (it/its) is a transmasculine poet, theater artist,
movement journalist, & insurrectionary anarchist. it is fueled
by folk-punk, Emma Goldman, and existential dread. it can
be found online at linktr.ee/mkzariel, creating conflictually
queer-anarchicspaces, and being mildly feral in the great lakes
region. it is kinda gay, ngl.

Acknowledging the existence only of individuals and families, Margaret Thatcher declared, "There's no such thing as society." Mustafa Khayati went a little deeper, in one of my favorite quotes: "The university teaches everything about society. Except what it is." Similarly, Peter Sloterdijk wondered what kind of "proverbial stuff" societies are made of.

How to pose such general questions with some focus and depth, when darkness has swept over contemporary social life? How is it that modern life, the "fully enlightened earth," has come to "radiate disaster triumphant," as Horkheimer and Adorno asked several decades ago?

Everyone knows that we can't go back, can't forsake modernity. But it has forsaken us and the rest of earthly species. Are we to stand for that? "Today it would be an understatement," Richard Wohlin wrote in *Labyrinth* (1993), "to claim that the legacy of modernity has fallen under suspicion; in truth, it has fallen victim to a frontal assault from all quarters."

Modern life began its conquest of the world in the 1600s, not much past the Middle Ages, and is now well into its demise at every level, for all to see. In recent decades, modernity is marked by declining confidence and energy, withdrawal from life and connection, and increasing violence, as social systems coalesce and reinforce authority and control. As Pico Iyer noted in *Global Soul* (2001), people worldwide increasingly dress the same, behave the same, in apartments, airports, schools, prisons that look the same.

Marx saw that modernity issues mainly from modern production systems. Mass production produces mass society, mass culture. Hardly a radical finding. J.H. Randall's mainstream *Our Changing Civilization* (1926) described how "machine production was destined to transform the face of Western society...the machine has brought its own world with it." And, modern city life brings new needs and problems that only more machines promise to satisfy, while community is steadily erased.

Max Weber, too, deemed the purely technical modernity's decisive factor. Lukacs, Gramsci, and Ellul viewed technological rationality as primary to the ruling ideology,



Where Is Home?

Modernity & Emptiness

JOHN ZERZAN

displacing public spaces and human interaction. Technology imposes its own agenda.

In the Dataverse, information technology is central to modernity's movement, the pace of the Machine, its capacity for manipulation and dominance. But as Manuel Castello argues in *The Rise of the Network Society* (1996), modernity is not at base a case of technological

determinism, rather, technology *is* society.

New information and communication modes are radically transforming our personal, social, and political lives in the algorithmic condition of digitized society. Shifting dynamics and priorities of the concept of knowledge were laid bare by Foucault: the disintegration and ritualization of experience, the absorption of life by the dominant modern techno-order. Modernity is revealing itself in accelerated fashion.

But, it's also clear that at modernity's very beginnings, major changes were afoot. Early in the 17th century, a kind of turning point seems to have been reached: a movement away from popular or folk culture, with less to draw on from such sources. And, less to adduce from tragedy, with the marked decline of the tragic hero.

John Donne wrote *An Anatomy of the World* in 1611 to commemorate Elizabeth Drury. Among its lines:

The sun is lost, and th'earth, and no man's wit
Can well direct him where to look for it...
For every man alone thinks he hath got
To be a phoenix, and that then can be
None of that kind, of which he is, but he.

Not the time of heroic quest, rather of Don Quixote's quixotic delusions (1605) and King Lear's madness (1611). Yet in *The Tempest* (also 1611), Shakespeare depicted Prospero going against the rebel savage Caliban, while also portraying the anti-authoritarian primitivist, Gonzalo.

About two hundred years later, in the early 19th century, Hegel was the first philosopher for whom modernity became a problem. Around the same time, Lord Byron, flamboyant poet, became the first pop star, the first to receive fan mail.

How this phenomenon has grown since, to today's in-

Late **modernity** is marked by **coldness, withdrawal**, decontextualization, low energy. The work of Andy **Warhol** and the standard blank or **sullen look** of fashion **models** come to mind.

fluencers, bloggers, and celebrities of every stripe. Massification and mediation charged forward as industrial society expanded. Tocqueville found American conformism very pronounced in 1830. Wilhelm Dilthey (1833-1911) strove to respond to the anxieties of modernity with grounded, non-abstract analysis.

Over time, modern society has become ever more deficient and discomfiting. *The Lonely Crowd* (1950) by David Riesman et al, and Robert Putman's *Bowling Alone* (2000) deal with prevailing alienation and isolation, among many other contributions along these lines.

Hannah Arendt's *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (1951) finds totalitarian outcomes as the logical culmination of political modernity. Slightly later and via several separate works, Ulrich Beck and Anthony Giddens termed late modernity "risk society," whose members are unavoidably at risk. In his 1930s novel, *The Man Without Qualities*, Robert Musil had already demonstrated that by definition, modernity equals crisis. Or, as Dmitri Nikalin concludes in *Critique of Bored Reason* (2022), crisis is the essence of the modern subject. It is only with modernity that boredom is inescapably the prevailing mood.

In *The Fall of Public Man* (1977), Richard Sennett spoke to the loss of a sense of value and planning in public life, a condition not confined to the public spheres. Late modernity is marked by coldness, withdrawal, decontextualization, low energy. The work of Andy Warhol and the standard blank or sullen look of fashion models come to mind.

Reviewing J.C.D. Clark's *The Enlightenment: An Idea and Its History*, Richard Whatmore judged modernity thusly: "None has found anything at the end of their Enlightenment rainbow" (*Times Literary Supplement*, November 5, 2024).

Modernity ends as tragedy. "Only a God can save us," said Heidegger late in life. For modern philosopher Giorgio Agamben, the concentration camp is the very model of modern history: "the destiny of the West." He has called for fundamental change, without providing specifics re institutional change. Inescapable modern life?

Walter Benjamin's last work, *Thesis on History* (1940) was a plea to "shatter the reified continuity of history, as it is normally written," (Martin Jay, *Force Fields*, 1993). A ringing, brilliant contribution to the critique of modernity.

Bruno Latour's *We Have Never Been Modern* (1994) lends his bit to an already fading postmodern current. It turns out that nature and culture aren't really opposed; they aren't even separate! World historian Oswald Spengler made his own blunder when he stated that modernity was a new, original, unprecedented orientation (*The Decline of the West*, 1918).

Max Weber had it right, seeing modernity as a link in the chain of the development of civilization, a logical outgrowth of the original template. The dawn of civilization, as Roy Ben-Shai grasped, was already the dawn of modernity (*Critique of Critique*, 2023).

From the ontological shift which is domination of nature, or domestication, the fatal seeds bear their fruit, from Enlightenment and industrialism to modern techno-life. Hegel said that we only learn one thing from history: that no people have ever learned from history.

At this stage of the game, though, I wonder how many can fail to understand what civilized life has brought forth.

John Zerzan has written for the Fifth Estate since the mid-1970s when he was introduced to it by the late Fredy Perlman. His memoir, *The Education of an Eugene Anarchist*, will appear some time in 2025.



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How Draft Refusal Helped End Conscription & Stop the Vietnam War

Hell, No, We Didn't Go!
Eli Greenbaum
University Press of Kansas, 2024

FRAN SHOR

The U.S. invasion of Indochina not only unleashed horrific death and destruction resulting in the murder of millions of Vietnamese, but also engendered massive domestic opposition. One of the significant flash points was the military draft.

Although the state had relied on conscription periodically since the Revolutionary War to enable the prosecution of its wars, the institutionalization of the Selective Service System (SSS) in 1940 in preparation for World War II and in the Cold War that followed, served as the mechanism for channeling young men into the military machine.

Indeed, the Selective Service System produced an internal memo labeled "Channeling" in 1965 that aligned the "national interest" with specific deferments from induction. Among them was a 2S category that allowed students to escape the draft, privileging in the process, predominantly white middle class college-bound youth.

In the revelatory words of the document, "the psychology of granting choice under pressure...is an American or indirect way of achieving what is done by direction in foreign countries." In other words, a constrained choice with resonances of an authoritarian state!

Claiming that U.S. warships were attacked in August 1964, by North Vietnamese gunboats in the Gulf of Tonkin, a fabrication highlighted in the *Pentagon Papers*, President Lyndon Johnson received the unlimited power from the U.S. Congress to escalate the war. Soon, induction notices began arriving in young men's mailboxes.

It is estimated that two million men were drafted between the summer of 1964 and 1973, the last year of the draft and the defeat of the U.S. forces in Vietnam. That same period, however, witnessed an unprecedented number of draft violations with half a million young men refusing, either directly or indirectly, to submit to orders to report for so-called duty.

Hell, No, We Didn't Go! is Eli Greenbaum's compelling story of how and why so many sought to evade the draft, risking legal punishment. Through the use of incisive and interesting first-person interviews, Greenbaum reveals the wide variety of interactions with the draft and the myriad forms of evasion and refusal.

As he notes, "If you were determined to avoid the draft and stay out of the army, there were plenty of imaginative roads to follow to achieve a Selective Service classification that would set you free."

It is clear from the stories recounted in Greenbaum's book that the foundational motivation for opposing the draft was, in his words, "because we doubted the legitimacy of the war."

While those of us who challenged the draft through outright resistance play a part in his narrative, Greenbaum's main focus is on men, like himself, who opposed the war, but were unwilling to risk prison as some twenty to thirty thousand of us resisters did.

The class privileges and capriciousness of the draft continued even after the introduction of a lottery in December 1969. When President Richard Nixon signed the lottery into law, he believed that it would, in his words, "take care of a lot of draft dodgers." Although it certainly re-configured the calculations for how to outmaneuver the system, it did not deter the continuation of challenges to the draft and resistance to the war machine.

According to one of Greenbaum's interviewees who outfoxed the lottery: "Of course, it wasn't fair that many of us would avoid the draft by a stroke of

luck, while many underprivileged men choose to enlist because military service, even in wartime, was the best of otherwise bleak occupational alternatives. The system was unfair, and we knew it. We didn't want them to go, but we sure didn't want to go ourselves."

Nevertheless, the diffusion of challenging the authority of the war machine, both outside and inside the military, led to the end of conscription.

As historian Penny Lewis argues, it was a combination of dissent and disobedience by GIs on the battlefields in Vietnam, coming from a political environment among young people rife with antiwar agitation in the U.S., that contributed to half a million desertions during the war and significant incidents of outright refusal to obey orders.

Added to the dissent and disobedience in the military, delegitimizing the draft and its punitive legal machinery led to its demise in 1973 in favor of a much more manageable volunteer army. Included in this undermining of the draft were hundreds of thousands of young men who even refused to register as was required by law upon one's 18th birthday.

In some areas of the country, such as Oakland, California, over half of the 18-year-olds failed to report, and of those who did, more than eleven percent refused induction. In some judicial districts, at least half of the criminal cases by the early 1970s stemmed from draft violations. In turn, fewer and fewer were being sent to prison, although a total of 5,000 men were imprisoned. It's not surprising that the draft and direct U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War collapsed in 1973.

Hell, No, We Didn't Go reminds the reader of this widespread dissent. Greenbaum's concluding remarks are a testament to the degree and intensity of that opposition to the war during the Vietnam Era: "It took guts to say no to the Vietnam war machine, to a government and its systems geared to use you. It took courage to say no to the power of the military, to bullying bureaucrats, to

the coercive nature of law enforcement, (and) to the politicians with their dubious motives and manipulative strategies."

Fran Shor was an antiwar activist and draft resister during the Vietnam War. His semi-autobiographical novel of that resistance, *Passages of Rebellion*, is available with a subscription to the Fifth Estate. See Special Offers at fifthestate.org

Civil

FLAVIAN MARK LUPINETTI

My brother Greg the prosecuting attorney advises me to chill
He says the arc of the moral universe bends toward justice
I ask did it bend toward justice for the guy who said that
but he hasn't a clue who I mean
my clue he harvested those words from a bumper sticker
his rosy perspective hogtied into irrelevance by cobwebs
of complacency constructed half a century ago

Greg hasn't attended the gun shows boasting armories
sufficient for overthrowing a third world country
or a first world one
He hasn't heard the fact-free propaganda blathered forth
by pseudojournalists accountable only to corporate profits
I would have thought he had some familiarity
with the tsunami of corporate crime
Maybe not
Maybe that would explain his inability to see
how close this empire is coming to collapse

Why when we contemplate a future civil war
do we imagine only a rebellion of the right
yahoos in red baseball caps rugby shirts and khaki pants
billionaire-financed police force-equipped
kidnapping a governor or dynamiting a courthouse
What if they simply seize the levers of government
Elections mutate into zombie referendums
All results not preordained overturned

What if we face the choice of acquiescence or rebellion
Do we fall to fascism or select secession with
Sacramento or Boston our latter-day Richmond

What if this time
the first person to fire
on Fort Sumter
has to be one of us

Flavian Mark Lupinetti, a poet, fiction writer, and cardiac surgeon lives in New Mexico. His poems and stories have appeared in *Bellevue Literary Review*, *Cutthroat*, *december*, *Redivider*, and *ZYZZYVA*. Mark's chapbook "The Pronunciation Part" will be published by The Poetry Box in 2025.

Prisons as the domain of hidden warfare in the U.S.



ERIC LAURSEN

When Heather Ann Thompson's account of the 1971 Attica prison uprising, *Blood in the Water*, was published in 2016, I was one of the readers who was overjoyed to see that historical turning point brought back to life after decades when it seemed to be slipping from popular consciousness.

The humanity of the prisoners came through, along with the murderousness and sadism of the State response to the rebellion. Thompson did well off her project, winning the Pulitzer Prize, testifying before Congress and serving on various panels on mass incarceration in the U.S.

A lot has happened since then, including the deaths of George Floyd and many other African American victims of a policing system that still refuses to see them as fully human, as well as the resulting #BlackLivesMatter movement. Now, Orisanmi Burton, an assistant professor of anthropology at American University, brings us a corrective to *Blood in the Water* and a very necessary new way of looking at Attica: one that coincides much better with the way it was understood at the time, both by the victims and by the State.

Thompson, like other writers over the years, “de-radicalizes the prison movement,” Burton argues in his book, *Tip of the Spear*, “relying heavily on state sources” and interpreting them in a way that emphasizes “recognition, rights, humane treatment, government transparency, legal redress, and reform,” all of which “stabilize, rather than challenge, the ‘foundations of the established order.’”

It was all about reform, in other words, painting a

Tip of the Spear: Black Radicalism, Prison Repression, and the Long Attica Revolt
Orisanmi Burton,
University of California Press,
2023

picture that no doubt was meant to help today's mainstream (white liberal) audience to empathize with a prison full of largely Black and Hispanic men who killed three co-inmates and held 42 officers and civilian employees hostage. Casting the rebels as victims makes them easier to see as individuals, but it also denies them their agency, instead serving up salacious, “explosive scenes of Black suffering and death.”

Relying far more than Thompson on the words and writings of the inmates and their supporters, Burton restores the revolutionary intention to Attica, reminding us that the central demand of the inmates—the underlying purpose of the uprising—was the abolition of the carceral system, a fact that goes almost unmentioned in Thompson's book.

Moreover, he contextualizes the four days of the rebellion—from September 9 to September 13, 1971—as one episode in what he calls the “Long Attica Revolt”: the series of jail and prison uprisings that started with the takeover of the ninth floor of the Tombs—the Manhattan House of Detention—in August 1970, spread to other New York City jails and then to the upstate Auburn Correctional Facility later that year, to Attica, and then to a host of other American prisons in 1972.

Some of the rebellions resulted in gains by the prisoners. City officials negotiated with inmates in the Queens House of Detention, and several inmates got new hearings that reduced their outrageously high bail. But overwhelmingly, the insurgencies were met with brutal repression, reprisals, and, ultimately, the vast expansion of the prison-industrial complex that we live with today.

Tip of the Spear offers plenty of suffering and death, but Burton is more interested in the vision that the insurgents brought from the Black Liberation movement into the prisons, how they spread a revolutionary ideology within the walls, the way the prison authorities and the State regarded them, and the measures the authorities put in place after the rebellions were quelled to keep anything like them from happening again. It is an appalling story, but sometimes a hopeful and inspiring one.

Prison abolitionist Angela Y. Davis, at the time, compared the Attica uprising to the Paris Commune, the great urban revolt against the French state that took place 100 years earlier. In both cases, the besieged set about remaking their society. In the case of Attica, that included instituting a directly democratic decision-making process, largely protecting the hostages, caring for the prison's sick and wounded, and

organizing to defend themselves from attack. Burton argues persuasively that a new gender fluidity developed between some of the rebels as well, countering the cultural association of sexual violence with Black males.

"Just to view what was happening in that yard, you know," one of the inmates, Frank "Big Black" Smith, later said, "it's like freedom. And it was a form of freedom."

The second and equally compelling part of Burton's book looks at the aftermath, beyond the end of the revolt in a hail of tear gas and bullets. Thirty-three prisoners and ten guards were killed on the final day of the uprising, all but four by law enforcement gunfire when the state retook control of the prison.

New York State and other prison authorities instituted a handful of superficial reforms aimed at pacifying the inmates and convincing the public that the abuses the inmates exposed were being addressed: not least, making TVs more available throughout the system as a way of keeping the prisoners pacified. A vast prison expansion program got underway, in part to disperse and isolate the "agitators" and "communists" who had "indoctrinated" the rank-and-file prisoners. The abusive "management control units," in which prisoners are kept in solitary confinement in tiny cells for between 22 to 23 hours a day, originated at this time to house the troublemakers; today, they are ubiquitous.

Most sinister were the chemical and other experiments in behavior modification that New York and other states unleashed on the rebels, sometimes in collaboration with the FBI and the CIA, stigmatizing them as "aberrant" and "psychotic": further proof of the inmates' understanding that the prison system is a form of domestic warfare. Burton marshals the recollections of individuals who were subjected to these "treatments" in some of the most chilling parts of his book. All this was happening in the very same years when US officials and Cold War liberals were denouncing the Soviet Union for its consignment of dissidents to metal hospitals.

As this suggests, *Tip of the Spear* is as much about the

Prison abolitionist Angela Y. Davis compared the Attica uprising to the Paris Commune, the great urban revolt against the French state that took place 100 years earlier.

State response to the Long Attica Revolt as it is about the revolt itself. What's especially striking from an anarchist perspective is how many organs of the State participated in the war against Black insurgency: the state and federal prison systems; the FBI and the CIA; politicians at all levels; private security consultants and "risk management" firms; academics from a wide variety of disciplines, but all focused on some aspect of rehabilitation and behavior modification; and the Pentagon, through the spread of its counterinsurgency doctrine and increasing supply of military-grade equipment to police and prisons.

Even more striking is how tightly their efforts dovetailed. All seemed to be working out of the same playbook which ran something like this: surveil, suppress, imprison, isolate, and rehabilitate, if not through reformist programs (prison with a smiley face), then through chemical means or further isolation. Their handiwork stands before us as the vast, distended, devouring prison-industrial complex we have today.

But give them credit for knowing what they were up against. When a member of the House Internal Security Committee, in 1973, said that "revolutionary groups" were recruiting "from behind prison walls and with the aim of tearing down the institutions and form of our entire government," he was not far wrong.

The job is still before us.

Eric Laursen is a longtime anarchist writer, journalist, and activist. His latest book is *Polymath: The Life and Professions of Dr. Alex Comfort*, Author of "The Joy of Sex."



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Hakim Bey:
Real and
Unreal is the
newest entry
in a growing

genre of literature, books about having met anarchist author and poet Peter Lamborn Wilson/Hakim Bey (1945-2022) and how it changed the author's life.

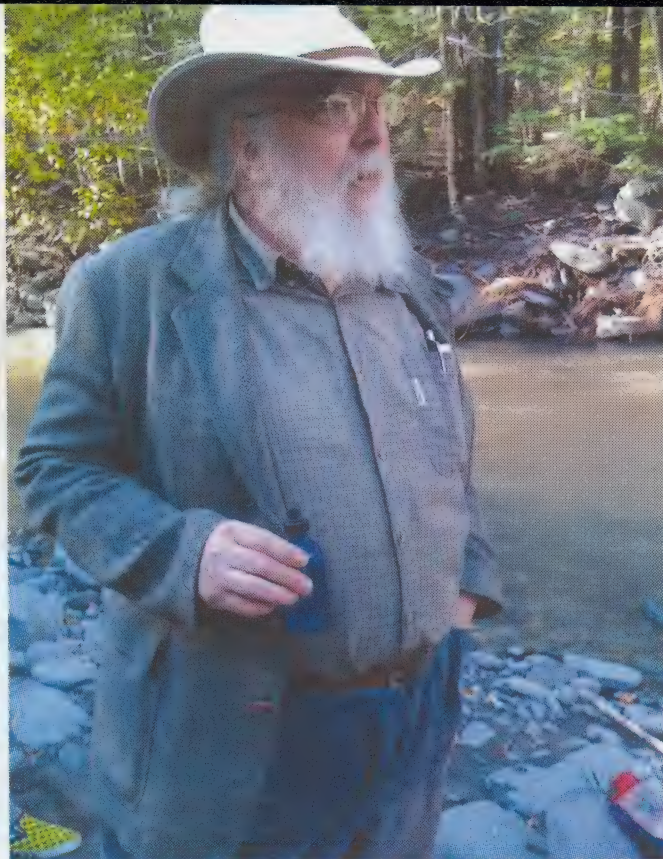
There was Michael Muhammad Knight and Jacob Rabinowitz before him. This is halfway to the reading list for a college course on the subject.

Wilson/Bey, who wrote frequently for the Fifth Estate, is perhaps best known for his book, *T.A.Z.: Temporary Autonomous Zones*, written under the latter name. He wrote countless books throughout his life, perhaps as many as 60, on subjects ranging from anarchist theory to comparative religion to media studies to poetry.

Thom Metzger's book is about his introduction to Wilson, his reception of what he had to convey, and the intermingling of their morphic fields. Metzger has written several novels beginning with the avant-shock title, *Big Gurl*, in 1989. Several others issued by a mainstream publisher followed, as well as a social history of the electric chair. He wrote for the defunct *Anarchy* magazine and became associated with Autonomedia through Wilson and was an editor of Wilson's *Moorish Science Monitor*.

Wilson had a knack for giving a special insight into whatever your current ideas or obsessions were. Some of this was that he had just read so many damned books that he could often provide short cuts to a bibliography, suggesting titles of which you had previously been unaware. But it was also more than this, as he had a knack for providing a subtle new perspective on a subject, which would sometimes add a whole other depth to what you were looking at.

The text's lack of distance from its subject weakens the book considerably since it would most likely make little sense to anyone who isn't already familiar with Wilson's work. There is little in the way of straight bi-



Crazy Wisdom in an Imaginary Fez

Knowing Peter Lamborn Wilson

JASON RODGERS

**Hakim Bey:
Real and
Unreal**
Th. Metzger
Motgus-sanlux,
2023

ographical explanation nor is there one provided here, but his life and travels are worth discovering.

Metzger describes Bey as "half magus and half mirage." There was a sense of illusion to Bey, as if he were performing an elaborate conjuring trick.

"Yet Hakim Bey did not really exist in the standard sense of the word," Metzger tells the reader, "unless a real person can be conjured entirely out of words." Bey was a literary hoax made flesh, from a master of literary hoaxes. The conjuring trick also worked as an escape act.

Metzger writes "Fact and fiction, for Hakim Bey, were opposite only in the way images in a mirror oppose the so-called real world." In this, he performed a Houdini act against the black iron prison that constrains imagination, an act complete with exotic imagery embedded within the stage design.

One theme of this book is what Wilson called "Mail-Order Mysticism." Metzger and Wilson met through letters and often inhabited this world. The mysticism has to do with the ephemeral qualities of postal communications. Letters have a special aura to them. The placement of stamps, a ritual quality.

Metzger writes, "Voices from the unseen- documents as amulets." Letters have a talismanic quality, something archaic. Metzger says of Wilson's letters: "His letters were one of a kind and private in a way that digital communication can never be." As this book is also a memorial, it is important how letters can function as a voice from the dead. When you have years of letters from a friend who has died, it can be like communicating with their spirit.

Mail-order mysticism relates to older tendencies in esoteric thought that are often disregarded by serious scholars. One is reminded of correspondence courses from mystical brotherhoods or mail-order catalogs. They are often considered déclassé, crude, or even crass commercialism. Nonetheless, they had a great influence on a variety of esoteric tendencies, ranging from Neo-Paganism to ceremonial magic, from Afro-cen-

tric magic to chaos magick.

In order to give these currents respectability (as well as help to provide more of a sometimes falsified lineage) these disrespected elements are minimized. However, I'd rather just look at the wild and gnarly lineage. Also, in the post-chaos magick world, it is important to look at the purely pragmatic element: Do these work? Yes, sometimes as well as other forms of magick.

Metzger and Wilson played up these mail order mystical tendencies by creating their own brand of snake oil: "Fez Brand Moorish Blessing Oil." Made from water, food coloring, and a few gold flakes, these weren't "to bilk credulous saps into buying scabrous crap. Our intention was far more esoteric. Like hoodoo root doctors, faith healers and snake-oil salesmen who traveled the back roads of America, we hoped to bring a whiff of the wondrous into otherwise banal lives." There is an element of *détournement* to how they reappropriated this.

Another aspect that relates to the mail is Metzger and Wilson's shared involvement with the zine network. Metzger first came into contact with Wilson, circa 1988, when he was asked to contribute to the anthology *Semiotext(e): USA*, a fat compendium of weirdness from the world of zines. By being included, Metzger was inspired to enhance and expand his participation in the zine network.

Much of the zine material is presented in a hard past-tense, which is unfortunate. There is a narrative that zines ended at the end of the 1990s, when in actuality they continue to thrive. Wilson/Bey stayed involved with zines up until the end of his life (when he got too sick to keep up with the mail). He sent me manuscripts of some of his later works, still typed on a manual typewriter. He never got online; never even had a computer. His submissions to the Fifth Estate also arrived in typescript.

Not all of the book is based upon distant communications through zines and letters. A great deal of it involves discussing during in-person visits, conviviality breast to breast. There is often a great sense of place in this book.

Both Metzger and Wilson had travel practices that related to psychogeography. Both loved to visit mysterious historical sites, from the 19th century popularizers of Spiritualism Fox sisters' cabin to an island on which Aleister Crowley performed an occult ritual.

Metzger describes some of this magical psychogeography: "So, with a pen and some colored markers, I converted a standard travel map into an esoteric document. Doing magic to maps, Hakim Bey agreed, can change the real landscape. The map is not the territory- and yet it is." Colorful descriptions of visits, urban neighborhoods, and Wilson's disheveled living quarters fill this book.

There are very few criticisms of Wilson/Bey in the book, which might be unfortunate considering that there were problematic aspects to him. Nonetheless, this isn't a systematic biography; it is about Metzger's friendship with Wilson.



It was written in the year after Wilson's death, so there is an element of tribute to a friend.

One of the areas in which there is some clear criticism, but in a humorous and bemused fashion, is the reminiscence of the Hakim Bey fad of the 1990s. At this point, there were a great number of people latching onto Wilson, trying to become a follower.

Metzger wonders why *Temporary Autonomous Zone* "so ensorcell the minds of dissolute poseurs and wannabe revolutionaries?" One woman is described as wearing a t-shirt that read, "Hakim's Baby" over her pregnant stomach. Metzger describes how a "gaggle of hipster twenty-year-olds literally sat at Hakim Bey's feet." To Wilson's credit, he never allowed a cult to form around him though he didn't mind soaking up adoration for short periods of time, such as being the center of attention at a dinner party.

Another criticism of Wilson is the discussion of his high level of speculation. He had a powerful imagination and was prone to speculation, flights of fancy, and exaggeration, which could sometimes mean the reader had to be cautious with his work. But if you were able to take things with a grain of salt, remain grounded, you would often find startling lines of speculation, leading to places you've never been before.

This turns out to be less of a fault and more of a virtue, Wilson's greatest magic trick: attempting to arm the imagination. He created the unreal Hakim Bey in order to deploy crazy wisdom, illumination that undermined all authority, even his own.

Jason Rogers is an autonomist critical theorist with a specialization in critical-paranoia, esoteric counterculture and mail order mysticism. Her most recent book is *War of Dreams: A Field Guide to DIY Psy-Ops*. Her previous book was *Invisible Generation: Rant, Polemic and Critical Theory Against the Planetary Work Machine*. Both are published by Autonomedia. She can be contacted at PO Box 701, Cobleskill NY 12043.

Peter Lamborn Wilson's writings in the Fifth Estate can be accessed at our website in Search/FE on the top menu. Enter both his names.



1920s Chilean workers scene from *El Montaje. ¿Quién conoce a Gómez Rojas?*, Teatro Fresa Salvaje (Chile), at 2016 Theatre Festival
Photo: Alvaro Pacheco

The Montreal International Anarchist Theatre Festival

An Unofficial History

NORMAN NAWROCKI

Despite being one of the most misunderstood political ideologies of our times, anarchism has a long and beautiful history of developed political thought, well-organized and vast social movements, and a rich culture of art, literature, film, music, and theatre. Non-commercial, non-bourgeois, anarchist theatre. Intoxicating anarchist theatre, steeped in freedom and equality, humanity and hope for all.

At the beginning of the last century, renowned anarchists like the American, Emma Goldman, and the equally respected Russian, Peter Kropotkin, strongly advocated for a politically conscious theatre and its radical potential, referring to the plays of Ibsen, Gorky, Tolstoy, Wilde, Erich Mühsam, Voltarine de Cleyre and Louise Michel. They emphasized that theatre was an ideal medium to communicate ideas, aspirations and underground dissident political opinions, with the focus on content rather than form.

Buenos Aires, already a hotbed of anarcho-syndicalism and working class organizing from the early 1900s onward, boasted not one but a dozen anarchist theatre troupes then, as did revolutionary peasant movements across Russia and Ukraine. Anarchist oriented surrealist theatre flourished in Europe in the 1920s onwards inspired by the fiery work of brilliant French writers like Antonin Artaud, Benjamin Péret, Tristan Tzara and others. Provocative performances took place in cafes, bars and theatres across the continent and beyond. In the 1960s, Vermont's celebrated Bread and Puppet Theater staged huge anti-Viet-Nam war processions and pageants in the streets. In the 1990s, Montreal's anarcho-cabaret rebel news orchestra, Rhythm Activism, produced radical theatrical community cabarets across Quebec to promote the rights of tenants and the poor.

More recently, the Montreal International Anarchist The-

atre Festival / *Le Festival International de Théâtre Anarchiste de Montréal* (MIATF) continued this radical tradition with its annual celebration of contemporary and historic anarchist-inspired theatre. A small group of theatre-loving anarchists started it in 2005. They decided that the city's claim as the hotbed of anarchist cultural activity in North America needed some incendiary theatre to reinforce it.

Thirty of them gathered in a local punk rock bar to read and perform extracts in both French and English from six anarchist plays from 1880 to 1980. Plays like *L'ami de l'ordre* (The Friend of Order) by George Darien, about the 1871 Paris Commune, and *Land and Liberty* by Ricardo Flores Magón about the Mexican Revolution. The event, "Rebel Words/*Les mots rebelles*," the city's first-ever celebration of bilingual anarchist theatre, set the stage for the larger annual international festival.

The second year, the small collective of anarchist actors, playwrights, and theatre fans sent a callout for plays on social media. Dozens of troupes responded, from Australia to Russia, Africa to South America, the Middle and Far East, and across North America.

In total, the eighteen-year-long, all volunteer undertaking presented over one hundred and twenty acts, almost as many troupes consisting of hundreds of performers, and drew several thousand attendees curious to experience this new unfamiliar genre of theatre.

Performers came from Chile, Italy, the Philippines, Germany, France, Belgium and across North America, including First Nations acts. Bringing New York's legendary The Living Theatre to Montreal for the first time, caused a media frenzy and sold out a five hundred seat venue over two nights. Vermont's acclaimed Bread and Puppet Theatre came three times. Other professional troupes such as Le Krizo Theatre from France; Belgium's Chalry Magonza ; Ceetuch Company and Teatro Fresa Salvaje from Chile; Berlin's Tallercito; Théâtre La Balancelle from Paris ; Le Grand Asile

from Brussels, and many more also participated.

As a bilingual, English/French province, plays were presented in either language, but also in other languages with translated projected scripts. Each edition of the MIATF was dedicated to either single or groups of anarchists contemporary and past or to movements, current and past where anarchists were involved. And appeals for solidarity with political prisoners or striking workers or students were shared. And always the upcoming anarchist bookfair was pitched as a great place to learn more.

In a city of year-round festivals including theatre, the MIATF was distinct in that it operated with no State or corporate sponsorship. It was self-financed through ticket sales, donations and benefit events. The anarchist programming helped demystify the often maligned and misunderstood word generally vulgarized in the mainstream media.

Each year, many plays addressed critical issues of the day from anarchist perspectives: gentrification, evictions and resistance; anarcho-syndicalist union battles; feminism and sexism; anti-war statements; sex work; and social media critiques. But also, anarchist history from Haymarket, Chicago, to the Makhnovist movement in Ukraine; the anti-fascism movement; the story of Sacco and Vanzetti in the US; Guantanamo; Japanese anarchism; the 1919 Winnipeg General Strike, and more. Much of the work centered on the experiences of the oppressed of the world and movements towards freedom.

Comedy, tragedy, marionettes and puppetry, mime and circus, rap theatre and poetic theatre, musical theatre—all was welcome, including a choir of local anti-poverty activists with their own band singing revolutionary songs.

The MIATF hoped to encourage the growth of anarchist theatre both locally and worldwide. To encourage both professional and amateur playwrights to delve into anarchist history and practice or its ideals for inspiration and turn it into relevant theatre for today. Anarchism is often associated with protests and being in the streets.

The festival also strived to provide affordable, accessible theatre for all, not just those with money. Ticket prices were deliberately kept low, from ten dollars to the final fifteen dollars bargain for a night with sometimes five or six different acts. Mainstream contemporary theatre is already priced out-of-reach for the many and has little relevance to their lives.

The pieces had to have a clear artistic vision, be accessible and well produced. The emphasis was to showcase good theatre, even if it wasn't professionally produced nor dependent on expensive technological smoke and mirrors. The stress was on content, not form. Each year, the MIATF also aimed to program a balance of visiting troupes and locals, professional and amateur to support home-grown talent.

Artists were always encouraged to "take risks, ask important questions, and explore the realm of creativity." The

MIATF provided a platform for theatre that would otherwise not be acceptable in traditional theatre venues because it was either "too political" or "not professional or commercial enough."

Each year, the venue included tables of anarchist literature. MCs or special guests spoke between acts about anarchism, the theory and the practice and the historical context for the festival. An MC might begin the program by describing anarchism as "a collective movement for personal liberation."

They would make the historic link between anarchist theatre, culture, and the anarchist movement explaining how well-known artists like Cezanne, Courbet, Seurat, Kupka, Pissarro, Frans Masereel and others were attracted by the freedom of expression present in the movement. And, how being creative helps people realize their potential, how it is empowering, and takes people out of their daily life and shows them another way to live.

Throughout the life of the festival, a series of fundraising cabarets were organized to help replenish the MIATF funds, but also to invite and assess new talent for potential pieces, have colleagues test new material, and begin festival promotion. Closing party fundraisers also helped wrap up each festival. But box office revenues covered most of the operating expenses. The shortfall was made up either by the organizers or donations from supporters.

From the start, the MIATF has always been an integral part of Montreal's month-long Festival of Anarchy in May. This is a wild, far-ranging celebration of anarchist art, film, music, poetry, literature, and partying organized by diverse small groups culminating in the annual Montreal Anarchist Bookfair, the largest anarchist event in North America drawing thousands of book lovers over a weekend.

We're proud to say that some of the early performers and playwrights who collaborated with us during the eighteen years (like Joseph Shragge, Caileigh Crow, Emilie Monnet, etc.) went on to win prestigious national arts and theatre excellence awards honoring their work. Other global artists who also generously contributed their talent and time to the MIATF keep the tradition alive by continuing to produce groundbreaking anarchist theatre.

One day, another festival with the same spirit will again bring together the best that this theatre has to offer.

The MIATF ended its glorious run in 2023 with a final performance. If any group is interested in starting another anarchist theatre festival, the collective members would be delighted to speak with them. See the online archive of the MIATF at: anarchistetheatrefestival.com

Norman Nawrocki was co-founder and co-artistic director of the MIATF collective. He performed in the festival and wrote and directed plays.

King Mob: The Negation and Transcendence of Art
David and Stuart Wise
Wise Books, 2024

LAWTON BROWNING

New York City, 1967. Roaming the streets in debate on the merits of the then-peak vogue art movement, Abstract Expressionism, are Ben Morea, part of a local affinity group, Up Against the Wall Motherfucker, and David Wise and Anne Ryder of the English group of cultural subversives known as King Mob.

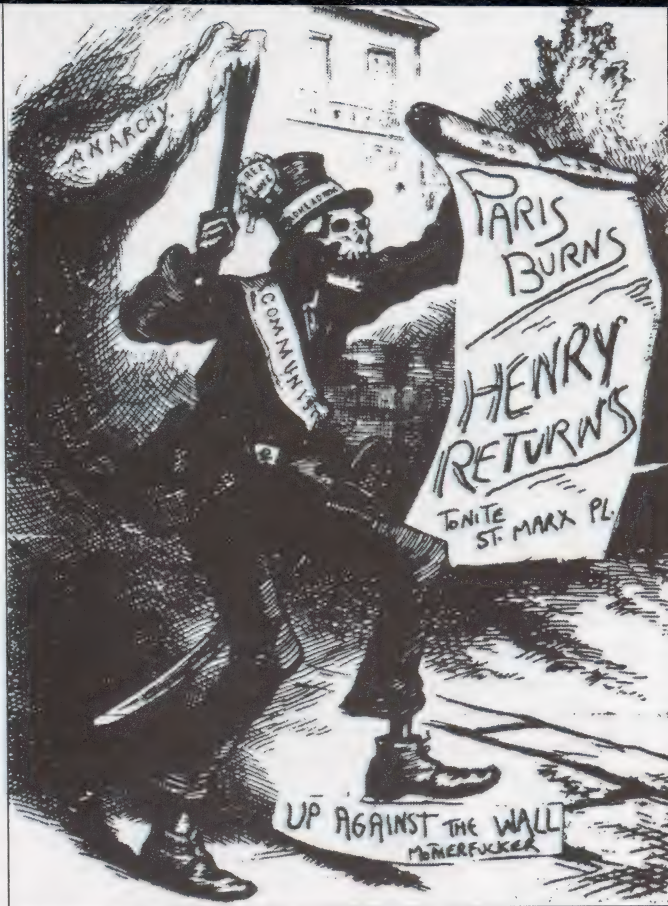
It was perhaps only a matter of time before representatives of these two groups would cross paths. Both King Mob and The Motherfuckers (as they were colloquially known) emerged from the political tumult of 1967 under similar formative influences: a Marxist critique of capitalism, the international art movement known as Surrealism and, in the case of King Mob, as expelled members of French critical theory group, the Situationist International.

Whatever the guiding impulse, King Mob made the right connection.

At the time, there would have been few better guides to the leftist and anarchist ferment in New York than Morea. KM's decision to cross the Atlantic to New York was to have a decisive influence on later actions such as their spontaneous disruption of a Merce Cunningham Dance performance in London, influenced by The Motherfuckers famous takeover of the Fillmore East Theater on New York's Lower Eastside.

But as David Wise recalls in "New York 1967: Black Mask and King Mob," the first essay in this recently published essay collection, it was not their attendance at a Black power rally or meeting fellow travelers like anarchist theorist Murray Bookchin that made the biggest impression on the English visitors, but their skirmishes with the New York avant-garde, in this case represented by Fluxus artist David Higgins and noted "happener" Alan Kaprow.

For Wise, it was Higgins and Kaprow's insistence on engaging with Morea as the artists he appeared to be rather than the revolutionary he actually was that best illustrat-



King Mob, The Motherfuckers & Revolutionary Art

ed the contemporary art world's inability to escape its own self-imposed limitations of installation and performance art. Kaprow's mealy-mouthed praise on the "Typography" of a recently published issue of *Black Mask* (The "Motherfuckers" self-published leftist magazine) and Higgins claim in a recently published book that he was about to "take to the barricades," evidently infuriated Morea, leading Wise to conclude that the already tenuous alliance between modern art movements ("Happenings" and Fluxus, etc.) and politically motivated direct-action groups like King Mob and The Motherfuckers had degenerated beyond repair. "We," says Wise, "were—and still are—for intervention and disruption; Fluxus and company for performance and display."

King Mob's willingness

to critique the most advanced and ultra-modern representations of capital and recuperations of real living as well as the artists supposedly rendered sacrosanct by the advanced nature of their artistic development, is a welcome reminder of the potential of the situationist perspective. The idea that one of capitalism's most insidious effects is its replacement of any art object—be it a sculpture, dance, or recording—with a financial value now is an evident fact.

As the culture industry of the 21st century continues its homogenization in the form of corporately controlled media like Netflix and financial entertainment monopolies such as TicketMaster, artists and makers would do well to remember that calls to revolution made by artists under corporate control will only emerge as impotent gestures of protest against their paymasters and a deadly suffocating sham non-conformism.

If the realization by Wise that it was the avant-garde that were most eager to betray their revolutionary ideals by capitulating to the market marks his starting point, the theme weaving the book's following essays together is the postmortem, an autopsy of the myriad ways artists and art movements are subsumed by capital. It can make for depressing reading.

Wise is able to illustrate the ways in which even an artist as clearly skilled in cultural and market manipulation as Banksy can be subsumed by the neo-liberal marketplace.

Though there is some subversive joy to be had in watching David Wise take down such contemporary gimcrack con artists as Damien Hirst who recently said that a banana taped to wall is “serious art.” Or, pick apart the vapid pretensions of European art house film schlock like *The Square*, the overall tone of the essays often verges uncomfortably close to despair. Though perhaps these days, in light of sociopath and fascist Donald Trump recently regaining the presidency of the United States, some despair may be in order.

Some of the Wise’s most fascinating thinking emerges in a later essay concerning an artist who at first blush appears to have much to offer in the way of anti-capitalist critique. Written in 2015, “All the Way to the Bank(sy)” sees Wise grappling with the implications of the enormously popular and financially successful leftist graffiti artist. His initial attempt at a description of the contradictions inherent in the work is worth quoting in full:

“With Banksy we have: An art that is anti-art seemingly beyond the realization and negation of art / An anti-capitalist ultra capitalism / the non-corporate corporate as his often telling street graphics morph into corporate praxis / a corporate subversion / Anarchy with a PR rep straight from Hollywood / an ultra-commodified anonymity / the clandestine guerrilla of subservice millionairing / disappearance and invisibility as great career moves / Anonymous guerrilla action becoming a personality cult, an innovative publicity gimmick, etc, etc.”

By teasing apart the legal apparatus behind which the Banksy myth is maintained (his manager, Holly Cushing, a PR flack formerly working for Hollywood star Sean Penn, his PR company, Pest Control, formed to discourage dealers buying and selling Banksy art, the filing for trade mark protection of the Banksy name with the UK intellectual property office), Wise is able to illustrate the ways in which even an artist as clearly skilled in cultural and market manipulation as Banksy can be subsumed by the neo-liberal marketplace.

Gradually Wise’s comparison of the PR stunts carefully designed to bolster Banksy’s credibility (actions such as rendering his own objects “worthless” by destroying them or giving them away, refusing to authenticate his art in the market, or the theme park parody called “Dismaland”) with similar but far less publicized and mythologized actions by King Mob, the Situationists and others morphs into an elegy for the early anarchistic days of the Internet and the counter cultures subsequent de-evolution into decadent arch capitalism ala Burning Man.

Early on in the same essay, Wise takes a moment to bemoan the current lack of “stunning inspiring examples of authentic anti-art vandalism pointing to a new world.” It would be interesting to hear his thoughts on the magnificent

and courageous actions of the “Just Stop Oil” group, whose youth and energy were much in evidence during their recent climate justice inspired tomato soup can attack on the Van Gogh paintings housed in the national gallery of art in London. This attack, on paintings whose current obscene market valuation would surely have horrified their creator, and the subsequent totally unjust two-year criminal sentence for the attackers (who merely stained the glass protecting the paintings with soup) showing just how far the powers-that-be are willing to take any even symbolic attack against the status symbols of their hegemony.

In general, one wishes that the essays in the book might provide more of a blueprint towards such actions. The only tender and sympathetic moments in evidence tending to emerge in between the brutal take downs, when the Wise brothers let down their guard and reveal small glimpses into their own personal revolutionary struggles.

These halting confessions on the psychic costs of the destruction of personal relationships and grinding poverty that can result from total commitment to revolutionary ideals, ring the most heartbreakingly true. And really, if the reader did ever get to learn more about the story of King Mob, “Having to take on heavily capitalized and armed drug gangs who’d made life impossible in the social housing complexes we occupied,” and the “direct action tactics... deployed against these dealers” hinted at in these essays, it might go some way towards convincing us that not all battles must end in defeat.

The kinds of psychic battles between ideal and reality that King Mob must have been regularly forced to engage in are given a direct historical parallel in an essay near the end of the collection. In “Mayakovsky and Tatlin: A catastrophic social/creative impasse,” Wise uses Futurist/Constructivist poet and artist Vladimir Mayakovsky’s suicide as a starting point to examine exactly the fate that awaits those “caught in the horrible nexus of a society... that gives no satisfaction on any level.”

Paradoxically, however, this essay is one of the few that seems to give room for some form of revolutionary optimism. Aided by the revealing shadows of Surrealist thought, Wise finds in the hedonistic “I” of Mayakovsky and his “selfish with a plus sign” search for total freedom, a connection “between the artistic avant-garde and an explosively but necessarily disorganized terrorism,” the same type of subversion that enabled King Mob and Black Mask to conduct direct actions with actual real-world effects.

Lawton Browning is a musician and writer. He lives in Portland Oregon with his wife, young son and unwieldy collection of art house VHS tapes.

Ideas for Building A New World

The Praxis of Street Medics



MAGS BEALL

It's a grey, wet day, so everyone who can find a spot is packed into the warehouse instead of spreading out across the grounds outside. In pockets around the space, people are skilling up or building art.

Doc is teaching a small group how to be street medics. Mass arrests, street battles, teargas, and more rain will come in the days ahead and people are readying themselves for the tens of thousands arriving to fight the machinations of global capitalism. It is April 2000, Washington, D.C.

By the end of the decade, thousands will gather as they have many times; the summit-hopping era in the U.S. using some of its last pull to counter political power at party conventions. One of the most notable being Saint Paul, Minn., 2008, the Republican National Convention. Among myriad other important aspects of this convergence, North Star Health Collective is founded in the Twin Cities to care for those in the streets that summer.

Street medic-ing begins neither in 2008 nor 2000. It has a powerful history that includes the health and care work of the Black Panther Party and Young Lords, though there are lineages far older than that. Often today's street medics name originated with the Medical Committee for Human Rights, begun in 1964 to provide medical care for civil rights workers in Mississippi during the Freedom Summer project. Medic skills continue to evolve and new medics are trained into the struggle today.

For over a decade, North Star, as a community health collective, has been training and running street medics. From global economic summits to Occupy in 2011, from every response to the almost annual police murders in the Twin

Cities to protests when Trump comes to town. Then, George Floyd was murdered and it is not hyperbole to say that everything changed.

Before May 25, 2020, the core organizers of North Star were a group of medics who opted to take on logistics—mostly training and supplies. In the uprising that followed George Floyd's murder, there suddenly weren't enough street medics to keep up with the days of intensity and so many people pouring into the streets. North Star had to lean on a foundation of ethics and praxis and build quickly without losing sight of the anarchist values at the core of the collective.

There is a difference between being a street medic and being a medic in the streets. EMTs, nurses, former combat medics, or anyone who hits the streets with their med bag when something happens are not likely prepared to medic. More importantly, without being trained by movement medics, they are not operating with radical values that set street medics apart. It's one thing to Batman in and dole out medical care to those wounded on the front lines. It's another to do so while making sure that a patient's bodily autonomy and dignity are prioritized.

Which is not to say that skills are not important. In fact, it is central to any movement looking to build a new world that setting and holding standards for work, including care work, be taken seriously. Critical to the work is maintaining people's confidentiality and only working within one's scope. That is, a set of skills collectively determined as a baseline standard for street medics. Almost anyone can take an EMT course, learn to use a tourniquet, splint an arm, etc. But care using consent-based practice with anarchist, decolonial, anti-racist, feminist, queer, and trans affirming praxis at its core is what street medic-ing must strive to be.

North Star has continued to evolve its collective structure as hundreds of medics joined during the uprising and slowly numbers then waned. At its core,

the goal is always to prefigure directly democratic structures that empower all members of the collective. Every North Star training begins with the group's ethics. If the struggle seeks to end white supremacy, patriarchy, ablism, etc., then care for those in the fight means that care work doesn't replicate the violence and violations common in mainstream health systems. North Star's core values include consent, do no harm, take no shit, respecting a diversity of tactics, and care for medics and collective.

(For more in-depth information on North Star's values, see *Constellations of Care, Anarcha-Feminism in Practice* by Cindy Baruka Milstein (Pluto Press, April 2024) and our website at northstarhealthcollective.org.)

Street medics love to say, "Do no harm. Take no shit." Because beyond seeking to minimize harm, street medics are taking a side and do not work with the state or non-state fascists.

Frequently "a diversity of tactics" gets used as a code that it has to be okay to burn things down. Street medics respond in such moments, but what often gets missed is that in the years during, following, and in between uprisings, there have been marches, protests, community assemblies, vigils, communal mourning, building occupations, mutual aid efforts, and more.

Individual medics have different feelings about various tactics being used yet the collective shows up where invited and needed, because people who are organizing and agitating deserve care. This is a constant and uneven balance as the group strives to make impactful, bold, creative tactics and strategies possible—*because* people are cared for.

Anarchist and abolitionist values mean taking care of each other. North Star medics rely on a buddy system with a dispatch back up.

North Star sees these ethics and protocols as a welcome duty, not a burden. To care for each other is to take responsibility for each other. In numerous actions across the continent, street medics have been targeted by police and fascists. Building and holding such structures and agreements is part of the active work of building the world we want. Thus, these ethics map onto the anarchistic and liberatory values that guide the work of the collective.

A moment of uprising can turn the world upside down, but praxis—practice based in ideas, in values—is what has the potential to build moments into movements. North Star and street medics in general cannot be seen or understood only in moments of upheaval or crisis, because how the actions taken at those points in time are defined by much longer, deeper relational work rooted in anarchist ideals.

North Star thrives because of the same need for praxis. Just as protocols update and change, the group grows and evolves. It's broad and it's granular. It is how the collective is structured, how medics check-in with each other at the start of an action, how dispatch makes sure they get home safely.

Praxis and ethics provide a compass for the wide-ranging and challenging ongoing process of remaking care work in the world today.

It's pouring and everyone is soaked. Yesterday, George Floyd was brutally murdered by a Minneapolis police officer. A march was called, starting at the intersection where he was killed and has found its way to the 3rd Precinct of the MPD. Sadly, it is not the first march of its kind in recent years across the Twin Cities, but this one has turned into a full street battle.

The precinct was initially breached, but now protesters have been pushed back and the cops are in defense, surrounded on three sides. They are firing tear gas every way they can. They fire a round and people move back to let the chemical spray pass. Street medics from North Star have followed the march and are now washing peoples' eyes out, getting people new COVID masks, and caring for them so that they can return to the fight.

That was five years ago. There have since been and continue to be challenging struggles. It is one thing to say that new levels were reached when that precinct burned down. It's another to live here day-to-day with police who continue to get more money and act with impunity.

The insurrectionary moments happen, but the daily work of world changing, of movement building is not inherently improved by them without autonomous infrastructure also being built on anarchist and abolitionist praxis. For all the broader attention that comes with the pitched battles and direct actions, there remains the question of what are the guiding ideas that move towards liberation.

Long-term projects can get stuck, lose agility. But if that can be avoided, they can also carry forward skills and knowledge for how generations have learned to fight better, stronger, with more care for each other. The uprisings of the past years have been glorious, surrounded by solidarity and the kind of breaking that makes way for new worlds.

They also, though, have shown what was lacking in anarchist physiology of movement—the "how" of what needs to happen to build a liberated world, not solely rage against the one that exists now. North Star continues to try to hold steady based in the idea that anarchist infrastructure and actions guided by ideas is needed to continue the struggle and build new worlds.

Mags Beall is an organizer in the prefigurative anarchist tradition; she identifies as a queer white femme. Over the past twenty-five years, she has organized against ecological destruction and for animal liberation, in (im)migrant solidarity, antifascist work, and more. In addition to North Star, she is active in food mutual aid, neighborhood solidarity, and environmental justice struggles.

JAMES C. SCOTT (1936-2024)

An inspiration to anarchists



SYLVIE KASHDAN

The anthropologist, James Campbell Scott, who passed away on July 19, 2024, approached the world from an egalitarian perspective. While not identifying as an anarchist, he brought an anarchistic sensibility to his study of the dynamics of power relations and the varied ways peoples have resisted authority in the past and present.

While teaching at the University of Wisconsin (Madison) and Yale University, Scott combined ethnography, history, and politics and developed criticisms of much of industrial capitalist society.

As a young academic in the 1960s, Scott hoped for a revolution to banish the old, toxic ways of life and remake relations among people and between humans and the natural world.

In a 2017 interview, he tells us,

"I started teaching during the Vietnam War, and I was a South-East Asia specialist. I was one of those left-wing people in love with the wars of national liberation, and of course that's why I did this book called *The Moral Economy of the Peasant: Rebellion and Subsistence in Southeast Asia* (1976), to try and understand how peasant revolutions happened."

Scott's research for the book, including field work in Asia, forced him to think about rebellion and social transformation in radical new ways, close to the understandings of some anarchists. He realized that peasants who were active participants in revolutionary movements were not necessarily ideologically converted to

the goals of political leaders and their new governments. Scott recognized that often, "Peasants make revolutions because they want a little piece of land. They want to get out from under, let's say debt, sharecropping debt, and so on." They desire control over their own lives.

He also realized that once the old order was overthrown, revolutionary leaders generally refused to allow the ordinary people the freedoms and peace for which they had fought.

"Sékou Touré, Kwame Nkrumah, Ho Chi Minh, not to mention Lenin and Trotsky and Mao, that when there was an actual revolution, it was often the case that they created a stronger state that was able to fasten itself on its people and govern their lives more brutally in many ways than the ancien régime, not actually improving the freedom and autonomy of much of the population."

Scott deepened his critique of authority and expanded it in space and time. He was excited to find people who defied established states and could be understood as examples of how resistance to authorities was possible.

He joined the growing number of anthropologists, including Marshall Sahlins, Jared Diamond, and Pierre Clastres, challenging the mainstream idea that hierarchy and domination were inherent in the nature of humans. As they became more familiar with the existence of small decentralized social groupings from the past and of currently existing non-state peoples, these radical anthropologists discovered compelling evidence that people lived healthier, happier and safer lives outside densely populated state-dominated centers.

Scott and others also came to reject the idea that human social organization must follow a one-way road from small, isolated hunter-gatherer bands, maturing through specific social stages into state society.

During the 1960s and 1970s, movements among indigenous peoples were growing and many anarchists were learning to respect their understanding of the world in non-formulaic ways. At the same time, Scott and other anthropologists began to recognize that current societies of traditional indigenous

peoples are not simply social remnants of the past. In many ways, current indigenous cultures can be understood as having developed to resist the incursion of state socialization. They are part of struggles against the invasion and degradation of their physical and social environments—ways of resisting slavery, conscription, taxes, corvée labor, epidemics, and warfare.

One of Scott's main contributions to liberatory thought and practice was his re-writing of the role played by groups subordinated to or threatened by state control, "non-state people" as he termed them. He found and documented a dynamic, adversarial relationship between freedom-seeking people on the fringes and those who live in centralized, state-controlled societies.

In his books, including *Seeing Like A State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (1998), *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Up-land Southeast Asia* (2010), and *Against the Grain: A Deep History of the Earliest States* (2017), Scott utilized recent archaeological and anthropological evidence to explain the intimate connections between the waging of war, slavery, and state formation, as well as the multifaceted relationships between monoculture, writing, and the domestication of human subjects.

In *Two Cheers for Anarchism* (2012), Scott identified him-

self as a "mediocre part-time farmer and beekeeper," whose scholarly work is written through what he designated as "an anarchist squint." He said that "if you put on anarchist glasses and look at the history of popular movements, revolutions, ordinary politics, and the state from that angle, certain insights will appear that are obscured from almost any other angle. It will also become apparent that anarchist principles are active in the aspirations and political action of people who have never heard of anarchism or anarchist philosophy."

Scott also expressed his appreciation for anarchistic perspectives as a Sustainer of this magazine.

His research helped strengthen the understanding that the contemporary civilized capitalist state system was never inevitable or pre-determined by some imaginary evolutionary law. Even as the horrors of today surround us, Scott helps us to remember that we have the ability to engage in direct action because we are all constantly presented with opportunities to choose between enslavement and freedom, and anything can happen!

James C. Scott will be greatly missed, but his contributions to free thought and action will continue to inform and inspire rebels now and in the future.

Sylvie Kashdan, a long-time friend of the Fifth Estate and part of the editorial collective, lives on Northwest Turtle Island.

Mutual Aid: A Fight for a New Future

Fight For A New Normal? Anarchism and mutual aid in the Covid-19 pandemic crisis

Editor: Jim Donaghey, Foreword: Ruth Kinna; Afterward: Rhannon Firth
Freedom Press, 2024

RUI PRETI

People all over the world, including in the U.S., are facing increasing authoritarianism, natural disasters, industrially-produced destruction of the living environment and intensifying social breakdown. Nevertheless, there is some basis for hope because of the growing numbers of mutual aid projects with the potential to be part of strengthening community defense and decentralized liberatory communities, emerging everywhere.

Many people who had previously found it difficult to imagine breaking out of the limits of modern capitalist civilization have experienced social solidarity and have discovered that a return to the old normal state of things is not the only possibility. In the context of what people have learned from experiences of the pandemic, many are talking and writing from an anarchistic perspective about what normal is worth aspiring to.

The anthology *Fight For A New Normal?* is part of the conversation. The articles in the collection explore both the positive and challenging aspects of mutual aid in general and with reference to several specific situations.

Articles include descriptions of mutual aid groups in places as diverse as industrial towns in the process of gentrification and those undergoing irreversible deterioration, in Britain, the U.S., Australia, the Philippines, and Indonesia, among others.

Anarchist mutual aid has a political perspective of cooperation as part of a model for how a whole society can be run, and the pandemic created a new awareness of interdependence. So, it is not surprising that anarchists have been active in many projects from Appalachia in the U.S. to Chile to Italy and many other countries.

Several articles and books have been published recently which give us the opportunity to compare experiences in different social settings.

Fight For A New Normal? provides descriptions of several different kinds of anarchist-inspired mutual aid groups. These demonstrate what is involved in providing social solidarity and individual support through bottom-up organizing.

One chapter is devoted to mutual aid groups in two cities, Glasgow and Brighton in the United Kingdom. An experienced anarchist activist, Sam, relates the development of Brighton's No Fixed Abode Mutual Aid into a well-functioning, decentralized group, able to respond collectively to complex issues of housing, poverty, mental health and support for migrants, by building up links with other groups already addressing these concerns, some anarchist influenced and some more mainstream.

Sam notes that his and other anarchistically inspired

groups differed in significant ways from groups focusing on charity work or government assistance programs. For one thing, the former refused to evaluate and divide people in need into deserving and undeserving categories, with the undeserving judged as personally and morally responsible for their desperate situations.

Instead, they gave assistance without demanding proof of worthiness. They were able to provide support to those who might otherwise have been denied it. This was an important aspect beyond what even the most generous charity can do because of financial obligations and entanglements.

Sam and his friend Aidan also describe some of the challenges faced by mutual aid projects in Brighton and Glasgow, which over time contributed to burnout of participants. They note that despite hopes of mutual aid helping to create community bonds, in those projects, all too many providers and recipients of assistance were unable to move beyond the division between helpers and those being helped.

They recognized the division as “disempowering those who receive support by keeping them in a passive role in relation to the groups, and creating a proprietorial ‘activist’ mentality in those who provided support.”

Volunteers continually tried to explain the difference between the mutual aid they were providing as acts of solidarity and the approach of charities and government welfare agencies. But this was not generally convincing to the grateful recipients. Given the continuing context of modern capitalist society, no satisfactory way of dealing with the problem was found.

An article about East London Scrub Hub describes a somewhat different kind of mutual aid activity, one which was a self-organized group of health workers and apparel crafts people who provided personal protective clothing and necessary accessories to healthcare workers in hospitals and clinics who were not receiving them from their employers.

Katya Lachowicz, an anarchist and one of the main organizers of the group, describes the development of two parallel types of scrub hub groups, one organized top-down and one bottom-up. The East London group was among the bottom-up type. It succeeded in producing high quality clothing and accessories, and also in bringing together many people who might otherwise never have had the opportunity to collaborate.

In addition, Lachowicz comments that joining in the Scrub Hub has helped many people deal with the psychological impact of the crisis, “this is because we ourselves have constructed conditions of dignity, human interaction and care in purposeful practices of work.”

Other articles examine what it means to prioritize caring for people with mental health challenges and with neurodiversity by insisting on prioritizing their self-determination as part of community support.

In her Foreword, Ruth Kinna, a British historian and anarchist theorist, cautions that anti-authoritarians, includ-

ing Kropotkin, do not claim to have discovered or invented mutual aid. “Rather they have generally sought to strengthen the dynamics of the already existing productive struggle to cooperate between families, friends, neighbors, in the workplace and in everyday life” that has always been part of human society. Moreover, when anarchists engage in mutual aid projects they enhance the practice with their social critique.

In the introduction, Jim Donaghey, a multi-discipline anarchist academic, who teaches at Ulster University, challenges the idea that social isolation and neglect are inevitable and normal in modern society. He notes that during the pandemic many people experienced a new normal of caring for each other, at least for a while, along with the feeling of increased possibilities for a life worth living.

In the book’s Afterword, Rhiannon Firth, an anarchist sociologist at the University of Essex, notes that anarchists and other social justice activists understand mutual aid as responding to human needs that are perceived and communicated empathically and through unmediated relations with others.

Each of the articles in *Fight For A New Normal?* argues in one way or another for going beyond mutual aid to challenge both the old and new normal by evaluating policies and practices in terms of their relationship to freedom, social justice, non-hierarchical order, participatory and democratic self-organization and self-determination.

Firth adds to Donaghey’s concerns by warning of the dangers and challenges of any solidified normality. She asserts that anarchist mutual aid involves trying to understand the needs of the person who is being helped. But none of us can understand others enough to decide what norms would be best for them.

She indicates that, “Even where norms may be collectively decided at one point in time, in a crisis individuals’ normal coping mechanisms break down, so attempts to impose social norms become at best ineffective, and at worst oppressive.”

Firth’s also asserts that mutual aid projects should not only serve those in the greatest need. Ideally, they should demonstrate what most people have to gain from connecting and sharing with others.

On the whole, the book’s essays lead to the conclusion that mutual aid is important as part of self-defense, but must be connected with positive forms of social struggle and respect for the autonomy of the individual in order to succeed.

Fight for a New Normal? leaves us with the challenge of continually questioning old and new norms, and exploring new values and tastes within a blossoming social context. This kind of response could lead to decreasing alienation, more inclusive, empathic, creative relations beyond the reach of commercial exchanges.

Rui Preti is a longtime friend of the Fifth Estate and a great believer in the value of continuous questioning.



Red Masks in Resistance Woman's March, Santiago Chile 2019 —photo Orin Langelle
Women involved in the 2019 People's Uprising protest in Chile were targeted for sexual abuse and rape by Chilean National Police. Marches were organized across the country demanding an end to violence against women.

Consider the source. What is Real?

Portraits of Struggle: Photos from 1972-2023

Orin Langelle

Global Justice Ecology Project 2024

PETER WERBE

The old newspaper adage that “a picture is worth a thousand words” has mostly been vitiated by Photoshop and AI. Photos have joined words in the realm of suspicion as now any image can be manipulated or even fabricated out of thin air with a few keystrokes.

So, am I deluding myself when I look at the subjects in Orin Langelle's photographs taken over 50 years on six continents and see something in the intensity shining out from them, that says, yes, these are real? That they each are worth at least a thousand words? Real people involved in struggles that are captured first by the photographer's eye and then his camera.

These collected photographs propose to “uncover and share stories that many are not aware exist,” Langelle writes in an opening statement. Although every photo is complete in itself, each demands we find out more about the struggles they portray.

Penetrating eyes stare out at us from beneath a balaclava-clad face of a Zapatista *comandante*. A child plays in a Landless Workers Movement encampment in Brazil. A woman fighting a pipeline in Virginia looks at us determinedly. The late Earth First! environmentalist Judi Bari walks on a beach in her last days. Demonstrators crowd

NYC streets to say no to a Republican National Convention.

Some go back more than half a century when Langelle was barely out of high school in Missouri and traveled to Miami for the 1972 Republican National Convention. There, he spent less time photographing the theatrical antics of the Yippies and more on capturing the faces of former GIs who protested as the Vietnam Veterans Against the War.

Others, as the decades slip by, document protests world-wide to stop the degradation of Indigenous people's traditional land through deforestation, dams, and climate-created disasters. The photos almost all picture a strong central figure suggesting the totality of a people or region under assault. Indigenous and their environmental struggles make up a large portion of the subjects. They seem the most powerful, perhaps, because their way of life and the land they fight to protect are the last remaining reserves of people with a direct connection to how we lived before the planetary work/war/profit machine began chopping everything down.

There are also many shots of political struggles, some such as the Zapatistas in Chiapas, Mexico, combining those with the defense of the land, but others from the 2019 Chilean uprising, anti-globalization actions, and again, confronting the Republicans, shot in urban settings.

Langelle's photos would be enough of a contribution to the maintenance of memory of battles fought against the rulers of a rapacious system, but his work with the Global Forest Coalition and co-founding the Global Justice Ecology project in 2002 marks him also as an environmental activist.

Look at these photos. Tell me if they could be created with AI. But there is another authenticity check; there is a trusted source behind it—the photographer and the works he's done on behalf of people most at risk and who are fighting the planet wreckers. AI fools people in a format like the internet where community is a chimera. In real life, in real people, in real struggles, honesty stares out at you as in these photos.

Get the book at globaljusticeecology.org, plus view the work of this group.

Peter Werbe is a Fifth Estate editorial group member who lives in the Detroit area. He is the author of *Summer on Fire: A Detroit Novel* and a collection of his Fifth Estate essays, *Eat the Rich and Other Interesting Ideas*. Both are available through the FE website FifthEstate.org.

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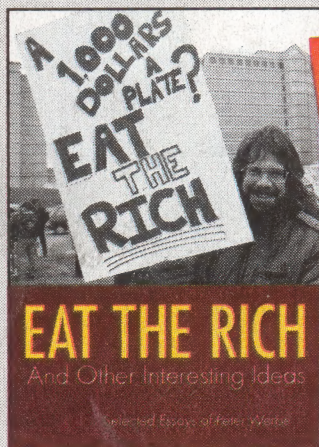
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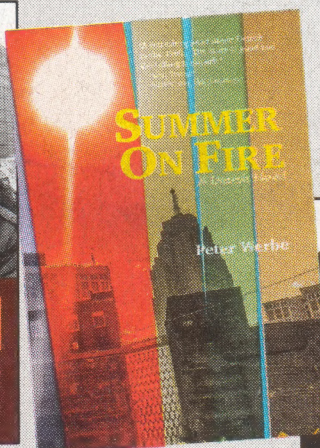


Eat the Rich

& Other Interesting Ideas
by Peter Werbe

40 Fifth Estate essays from a long-time FE staff member that provide insights into: anarchism, capitalism, technology, civilization, racism, patriarchy, politics, culture, music, the environment, his trips to Cuba, and other subjects in a readable and highly entertaining manner.

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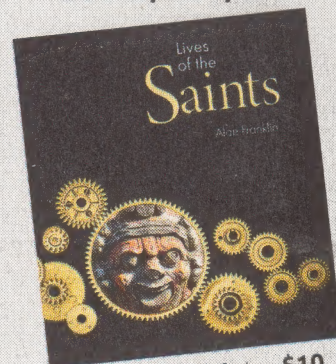


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